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Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

BESSEMER CITY, NORTH CAROLINA



Centennial 1903 - 2003

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Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Prologue

The early history of Grace Evangelical Lutheran church was most interesting. But, when I started researching and collecting information about the early beginnings of our church, reading the statistics, names, dates and numbers, I realized that history could sometimes be very impersonal and dry. I didn't want our Centennial Book to be just statistics of past events; so I have tried to bring out the human side of things and individual personalities within our church. Some data was either missing, incomplete, lost or no records were kept. I have tried to include all pertinent information.

In the early years, all elected officers of the church were male. The men were the leaders who took care of all business transactions, all voting, etc. Through the years, the men of the church have made great strides in completing various tasks. They have purchased land, built two churches, an educational building, a new parsonage and completed many projects concerning the up-keep of these properties.

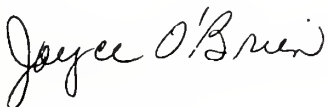
From 1903 to present day, the women of Grace have evolved from a stewardship role to that of leadership. The women of our church are involved in many important leadership roles and the decision-making processes of church business. We have had a very dedicated group of women over the years that have worked hard in making sure that our church has run smoothly.

The Youth of our church are the leaders of tomorrow. It is my hope that they can look at these pages and realize just how involved our young people have been in the past, and how important they are to the church. By participating in church activities, young people prepare themselves (sometimes unknowingly!) for leadership roles in the future. The experience of participating is so valuable!

Grace is a very active church. We have accomplished many projects, keeping our church facilities maintained over the years. We enjoy many social activities and work together as a family. There have been hard times and good times. Membership has grown and declined, but Faith has carried our church for 100 years! I pray God will continue to bless our congregation and lift us up when we fall.

It truly has been an interesting and educational experience for me compiling our church history. It was a joy, but at times tiresome when I stayed up too late because I was so engrossed in the material. I enjoyed talking to present as well as past members of Grace, listening to them recall old stories that I hope will rekindle memories.

I hope each of us are enlightened and get great pleasure when we read about Grace Lutheran Church and it's 100 years of existence. I pray that God will bless each of us, and continue to strengthen our church and make it grow!



E. Joyce O'Brien
June 2003

Pastors of Grace

Pastor Carroll Irving Morgan

Pastor Morgan was our first Pastor. He helped organize and build Grace Lutheran Church. He served as our Pastor from 1903-1905. He was born September of 1873 in Lexington County, SC. His wife was Lillie Russell (Tyson) Morgan. They were married December 26, 1911 in Salisbury, NC. They had two children: Margaret Russell (died three days after birth), and Grace Carroll. Pastor Morgan died in January of 1948.

Pastor John Hall

Pastor Hall was our second minister. He served from 1906-1912. He was born April 21, 1878 in Chillicothe, OH. He was married to Lela Fisher (Yoder) Hall. They had five children: Lela Elizabeth, John Robert, Margaret Ellen, Charles Noah and William Edward, who became a minister. Pastor Hall died November 18, 1968.

Pastor Martin Alexander Ashby

Pastor Ashby was our third Pastor. He served six months from 1912-1913. His place of birth was Culpepper, VA, October 10, 1868. He was married to Ida Rebecca (Pence) Ashby. They were married June 1, 1893. They had two children: John A. Ashby, Jr. and Nannie Virginia. Pastor Ashby died October 5, 1956.

Pastor Lester Lee Huffman

Pastor Huffman served Grace from 1914-1915. He was born June 19, 1890 near Alma, in Page County, Virginia. Married Minnie (Beam) Huffman November 6, 1916 in Gastonia, NC. They had two children: Richard Long and Harold Lee (who was born 4 months after his Father's death). Pastor Huffman died October 13, 1918 of influenza in the fifth year of his ministry.

Pastor John Calvin Dietz

Served as the Pastor of Grace from 1915-1923. Pastor Dietz was born March 3, 1876 in Catawba County, NC. He was married to Minnie Rose (Ruddisill) Dietz. They married September 19, 1900 in Maiden, NC. The Dietz' had two children: Paul Hunt and Henry W. Pastor Dietz died February 12, 1954.

Pastor John Lewis Yost, Sr.

Pastor Yost, our sixth Minister, served Grace from 1923-1924. He was the last Pastor in which Grace was still affiliated with Holy Trinity, Gastonia. He was born March 9, 1893 in Rowan County. He was married to Eva Louise (Dunning) Yost on May 24, 1917 in Columbia, SC. They had two children: Rev. John Lewis Yost, Jr. and Elizabeth Louise. Pastor Yost died March 6, 1985.

Pastor Noah David Yount

Pastor Yount ministered from 1925-1937. He was born February 24, 1892 near Conover, NC. He married Rena Bertie (Simmons) Yount November 10, 1936 in Conover. They had two children: John David and Sara Ella. Pastor Yount died October 1, 1980.

Pastor George Walker McClanahan, Jr.

Pastor McClanahan served as Pastor of Grace from 1938-1948, when he retired. He was born March 6, 1863 in Beeville, Texas. Orphaned in childhood, he and two brothers and a sister were brought to Salem, VA, were reared and educated by their uncle with proceeds from their Father's estate. He and Eliza Ann (Robertson) McClanahan were married in June of 1893 in Strasburg, VA. He and his second wife, Cedelia May (Lovell) McClanahan, were married November 24, 1915 in Columbia, SC. Pastor McClanahan died October 12, 1949.

Pastor John Paul Rimmer

Pastor Rimmer was our ninth Pastor. He served from 1948-1952. He was born April 12, 1921 in Troutman, NC. Pastor Rimmer married Eva Bryte (Bess) Rimmer on April 8, 1944 in Cherryville, NC. The Rimmer's had three children: Rev. John Thomas, Martha Jane and Jerry Franklin. Pastor and Mrs. Rimmer reside today in Cherryville, NC.

Pastor Hugh Perry Barringer

Pastor Barringer was Minister of Grace from 1952-1956. He was born April 14, 1905 in Somerset, KY. He married Edna (Coogler) Barringer June 29, 1932 in Irmo, SC. They had two children: Hubert Paul and Larry Edward Barringer (who resides in Bessemer City today with his wife, Jo Ann). Pastor Barringer died March 6, 1956 while Pastor of Grace.

Pastor George Gaston Robertson

Pastor Robertson served Grace from 1956-1961. He was born November 27, 1916 in Greensboro, NC. He married Zerma Plinia (Smith) Robertson December 27, 1946 in Cramerton, NC. They had two children: Sylvia Lee and Megan Zerma. Pastor Robertson died July 25, 1986.

Pastor Edwin Lee Ricks

Pastor Ricks, our twelfth minister, served our congregation from 1962-1965. He was born January 4, 1937 in Rocky Mount, NC. Pastor Ricks was very youth oriented and did much for the young people in our church, as well as our community. He died June 27, 1982.

Pastor George Washington Shuford

Pastor Shuford was our Minister from 1966-1969. He was born February 22, 1925 in Lincoln County. He was married to Orpha Christine (Ford) Shuford on August 25, 1959 in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, Germany. They had two children: Michael George and Mark David. Pastor Shuford died June 2, 1978.

Pastor George David Swygert, Sr.

Pastor Swygert was Pastor of Grace from 1970-1981. He was born October 5, 1941 in Chapin, SC. He married Marilyn Mae (Bopp) Swygert June 8, 1963 in Clemson, SC. They had three children: George Davis Jr., Martha Lynn and Michael Luther. They now reside in Salisbury, NC where he is Pastor of Salem Lutheran Church.

Pastor Dennis Lee Setzer, Jr.

Pastor Setzer, our fifteenth Minister, served Grace from 1982-1986. He was born August 23, 1944 in Lincoln County, NC. He married Gloria Jean (Miller) Setzer on July 17, 1964 in York, SC. They had four sons: Dennis Lee, III, Kirk Monroe, Trevor Colby and John Robinson. They now reside in Myrtle Beach, SC where he is Minister at St. Phillip's Lutheran Church.

Pastor Robert Frederick Mitschke, Jr.

Pastor Mitschke was Pastor of Grace from 1986-1999. He was born March 28, 1952 in Charlotte, NC. He and his wife, Ann Nashe (White) Mitschke, were married July 29, 1972. They had two children: Elisha Adraiana and Robert Frederick, III. They now reside in Richfield, NC where he is Minister of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church.

Pastor Cyrus Field Frazier, Jr.

Pastor Frazier was Interim Pastor at Grace from 1999- 5/27/2001. He was born August 23, 1927 in Claremont, Catawba County, NC. He and his first wife, Ann Ranes (Cline) Frazier, were married April 15, 1958. She died July 18, 1984. They had three children: Laura Cline, Cyrus Field, III and Mathew Woody. He married his second wife, Ann (Hartsfield) Frazier on April 28, 1990.

Pastor Leslie Barnett

Pastor Barnett was installed as Pastor of Grace July 15, 2001. She served until November 14, 2001.

Pastor Cyrus Field Frazier

Pastor Frazier returned to Grace November 18, 2001, where he remains our Minister.

History and Life of the Congregation

Church History

Around the close of the Nineteenth century, the little town of Bessemer City, NC mushroomed into existence on the eastern slopes of Whetstone Mountain. Among the people within and around its boundaries were those of German decent. These people were Lutherans who were affiliated with the Tennessee Synod of North Carolina. Most of them were members of either Antioch Lutheran Church near Dallas, or St. Mark's Lutheran Church near Crouse.

As time went on, the Lutheran families increased in numbers, and made many trips to attend the services which were held twice daily, one Sunday per month. The families brought their lunch, and made a spread on the grounds, thus making it a social as well as a religious service. But, the distance was too great. With several streams to cross and the mode of travel in those days being primarily on horseback, buggy, wagon and by walking, church goers decided to form their own local Lutheran church in the new town of Bessemer City which was incorporated in 1893.

They began by holding their services in school buildings and the Methodist Church (now St. Andrew's Episcopal Church). Later, they used the Presbyterian Church twice per month. This is where the youth attended Sunday school. The preaching was done by Pastors from different Lutheran churches in the vicinity. One minister who participated was Rev. B.L. Wessenberger.

Ten years later, in January or February of 1903, their efforts materialized. For it was then, that the Rev. C.I. Morgan helped them organize the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bessemer City. Thus, Rev. Morgan became the church's first Pastor.

Charter members were as follows:

Mr. D. Pickney Froneberger (**Deacon**) and wife Roxanna
Mr. Ernest L. Froneberger (**Secretary & Treasurer**) and wife Jessie
Mr. Henry C. Froneberger (**Elder**)
Mr. Samuel T. Hovis and wife Alice
Mr. Robert L. Payne (**Deacon, Trustee of Property**) and wife Lucy
Mr. John W. Pierce and wife Rosa
Mr. Henry L. Rhyne (**Elder**) and wife Sarah
Mr. Jonas E. Rhyne and wife Martha
Mrs. Eliza Thornburg
Mr. Isaac A. White (**Elder, Trustee of Property**) and mother Mary Ann White

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

Soon after the formal organization, the church purchased a lot on the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and 11th street. The deed, made to Robert L. Payne and Isaac A. White as Trustees of Property, was notarized February 23rd, 1903. Pastor Morgan was a tireless worker and gave his time and attention to our newly formed congregation, in addition to serving as Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Gastonia, NC.



In 1904, a frame church (56' X 30') was built at a cost of about \$1000 dollars! Most of the work was done by the members themselves, during the Spring and Summer of 1904. The men and the boys of the church went to their woods and cut timber and hauled the logs to the saw mill where the trees were cut into ceiling, weather boarding, flooring and framing lumber. Every male applied himself into the building of the church and took pride in doing so. This work was done after the crops were "laid by" in the late summer months. The first service was held in the autumn of 1904.

One charter member of our church, Henry Levi Rhyne, and wife Sarah, made their home on a farm outside Bessemer City. Their land was given to Sarah by her father. Henry was a farmer and carpenter. He contributed free labor to help build the white-framed church. He also helped build the wooden slat benches that stood before the pot-bellied stove. Mr. Rhyne, father of Ruth Rhyne McCall and grandfather of Catherine Ross, also donated his time by teaching Sunday School,

by being a Deacon and by serving as an Elder.



Mr. & Mrs. John Thomas Dameron



Sarah F. Catherine Best Rhyne



Henry Levi Rhyne

Other early members of the congregation were: Mrs. Venie Payne and family, Mrs. Frank Davis, Mr. Ed Davis and brother, Mr. & Mrs. Joe Clemmer, Mrs. J.T. Boyles and family, Mrs. J.M. Boyles, Mr. & Mrs. J.F. Pierce, Mr. & Mrs. Poly Rhodes and family, Mr. & Mrs. John J. George and family, Mr. & Mrs. A. George and family, Mr. & Mrs. H.D. George and family, Mrs. W. L. Ormand, Miss Emma Rhyne, Mr. & Mrs. John S. Rhyne and family, Mrs. F. A. Lineberger and family, Mr. & Mrs. John W. B. O'Brien and family, Mr. & Mrs. A. B. Kiser, as well as the Best, Lewis, Smith, Carpenter, Counts, Harmon, Lutz, Beam, Plonk, Willis and Dameron, families (and others).

— History and Life of the Congregation —

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bessemer City remained with the Tennessee Synod until 1920, when the Tennessee, North Carolina and other Synods of the Lutheran church merged to become the United Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina. Our church automatically became an affiliate of this new group. It was after this merger that the “Church Council” became the ruling body under the new constitution. The titles, “Deacon” and “Elder” for the church officers were discontinued. The council consisted of five members (two Deacons & three Elders) until 1926, when a new constitution was adopted. After that, the council was composed of nine members, consisting of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Shortly after the merger of the Synods, members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bessemer City began to think about a special name for their church. On October 2, 1921 at a regular congregational meeting, the name was changed to “Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church”.

During the first thirty-five years of existence, Grace received some help from the mission board. During 1903-1910, Grace was in a Parish with Holy Trinity of Gastonia, and was served consecutively by Pastors C.I. Morgan and John Hall. During 1910-1912 Grace was affiliated, jointly, with Holy Trinity and Lutheran Chapel (Gastonia) and was served consecutively by Pastors John Hall and M.A. Ashby. Grace and Lutheran Chapel were served by occasional supply Pastors in 1913. During 1914-1915, these two churches were served by Rev. L.L. Huffman.

In 1915 Grace was again assigned to Holy Trinity’s Parish and was served by Rev. J.C. Dietz through 1923 and by Rev. J.L. Yost from 1923-1924. In 1925 Grace and Ascension Lutheran Church (Shelby) were put in the same mission Parish. Both were served by Rev. Noah D. Yount until 1932 and Grace alone was served by him until 1937 when the mission board discontinued it’s contributions. Since 1938, Grace has assumed all responsibility for its existence and a full time pastor.

Life of the Congregation

*“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”
Mathew 18: 20*

The church is its congregation. The church building may be a wooden structure, or a large brick dwelling. The church building may burn, Pastors may come and go, the name of the church may change, but the **people** are the church, who come together to hear the word of God, to receive Holy Communion and to be Baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church has persevered for 100 years, bound by faith in God! The life of our congregation began in 1903 with 18 charter members. As with many churches, membership has risen and fallen over the years. Currently, we have Approximately 90 members at Grace in 2003. We have had as many as 200 members!

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

Many in our congregation today are descendents of the charter members that started Grace. In gathering information and talking to our older members, we have collected many interesting facts, stories, and heard funny tales! The following is an account of the lives of our church family throughout its 100 years.

When Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Kiser moved to Bessemer City in the spring of 1904, they retained their membership at Bethel Lutheran Church until 1916. However, the Kiser's attended most of the services at the Bessemer City Lutheran church from the time of their arrival. Mr. Clyde Kiser was born in July of 1904 and it is quite possible that he and his sister, Alna, were taken to the very first service held in the new, white-framed Lutheran church in the Fall of 1904.

When service began, the men sat on the left of the aisle, and the women sat on the right. Only the young couples sat together! The church was lighted by oil lamps that were suspended from the ceiling by chains. In the summer, stick-handled paper fans were standard equipment to beat the heat. These were usually furnished, free, by local stores. The fans included an advertisement on one side and a picture on the other. Their vigorous movement must have been somewhat distracting to the Pastor while he was preaching. Some ladies used their own, dainty folding fans and the men sometimes used their stiff straw hats.

One memory that Mr. Clyde Kiser had was that of Pastor John Hall and several men sitting around the "pot-belly" stove before service. Pastor Hall told a story about an "Englishman". Young Clyde was a little puzzled by Pastor Hall's use of that word because he thought that all who spoke English were "Englishmen"! Pastor Hall later became a Chaplain during World War I and remained in military service for many years.

Our fourth Pastor, Rev. L.L. Huffman, was a young bachelor just out of seminary when he joined us in 1915. He was a good speaker, often witty and jovial. Young people from other denominations frequently came in groups to hear him. He organized and conducted a Saturday afternoon catechetical class for pre-confirmed youngsters. He also initiated regular choir practice held either at church, or homes of members who had a piano or organ. Electric lights were installed in the church during his tenure. This enabled our church to hold services at night.

Eventually, some of the older and more conservative members of the church became a little alienated when word "got around" that the preacher sometimes played "Rook" with the young people of the community! In those days, card playing, like dancing, was considered taboo. Some of the older members were relieved when Pastor Huffman accepted a call to another church, but many of the younger ones were sorry to lose him. Pastor Huffman's promising career was cut short by death during the influenza epidemic of 1918.

Our fifth Pastor, Rev. John C. Dietz, served during 1915-1923. Before coming to Holy Trinity and Bessemer City Lutheran Church, he had served in a neighboring Parish composed of Crouse, Bethel, Bethpage and St. Mark's Lutheran churches. He was a mature, compassionate and scholarly man and seemed to be particularly interested in the life and writings of St. Paul. He was also interested in the book of Revelations. Rev. Dietz was the first Pastor in our church to bring his family to Sunday services on a regular basis. His two sons, Paul and Henry, were Clyde Kiser's age. An early baptism that Pastor Dietz performed was that of David Anderson Coon, child of Henry and Ferry Coon, on February 16, 1919.

The ringing of the church bells was an important duty on Sunday mornings. Bells rang for ten minutes to announce that Sunday School would be held. Virtually all churches rang their bells on Sunday morning. Church bells also rang in the New Year on New Year's eve.

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

Our sixth Pastor, Rev. John L. Yost, remained only two years (1923-24). He returned to the “little white church” to officiate at the first marriage; that of Miss Elizabeth Froneberger to L.E. Wall, D.D.S. on June 3, 1925. His Pastorate was the last in which Grace was affiliated with Holy Trinity. Rev. Yost eventually became President of Southern Seminary located in Columbia, SC.

During 1925-1937, Rev. Noah D. Yount served as our seventh pastor. For most of that period, Grace and Ascension Lutheran Church (Shelby), were a mission Parish. Bessemer City was the Pastor’s residence, since Grace had more members than in Shelby. Although he remained a bachelor until 1937, Rev. Yount expressed an early desire for a parsonage. At the March 3, 1926 meeting, the Council of Grace announced that the contract to build our first parsonage was rewarded to Dixie Lumber Company of Cherryville, NC. The new construction of a six room framed bungalow was to be built on a lot on Washington Ave. near 14th Street. Contract price was \$2,749.00!

In 1928, Mr. L. G. Rhyne was Treasurer of Grace. On January 1, 1928, a collateral note for street and sidewalk assessment (street improvement) was taken out by Grace Lutheran Church to Bessemer City in the amount of \$983.09. This covered much of the block on Washington Avenue.

On April 6, 1930, Mr. A.B. Kiser was appointed Treasurer. He received from Mr. L.G. Rhyne \$24.22, which was the balance of our bank account! Mr. Kiser held this office for 23 years!

During the Depression, our church fell on hard times. Our devoted members helped when they could. Most were not employed. Those who did have a job worked in the mills for about \$2.00 per day. We fell behind paying our bills, and were constantly over-drawn with the bank. In reading Mr. A.B. Kiser’s treasury report, you could see how our little church struggled. In 1930, Rev. Yount’s salary was \$62.50 per month. Yet, we had to pay him on an installment plan! In February of 1930, the church bought 500 lbs of coal for \$2.50. We could not pay this bill until May 5! Other expenses in May were:

Building fund loan	\$5.00
Foreign Mission Fund	\$7.50
Street Assessment Loan (City of B.C.)	\$15.00
Hebrew Missions	\$2.50
Orphan’s Home	\$3.20
Insurance for Parsonage	\$11.68
B.C. School Board	\$45.00
Ministerial Pension Fund.....	\$6.50

OVERDRAWN —\$2.44

It was nothing out of the ordinary to have an account balance of about .64 cents, or even be in the red! At years end, we owed Pastor Yount \$92.00!

Many members in our congregation were not able to give an offering. In 1931 we had 116 members. Only sixty-nine members contributed during the year. Forty-seven could not give anything. Collection for the year totaled \$1,154.72. Expenses were \$1,153.72, leaving a balance of one dollar! In 1932, only thirty-three contributed. Eighty-two people could not give a penny! The Pastor’s salary was \$190.02 in arrears!

The church council met December 14, 1932, with Pastor Yount, C.G. Carpenter, E.L. Froneberger, R.L. Lewis, A.B. Kiser, L.G. Rhyne and M.L. Rhyne present. The mood was so despondent that no minutes were

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

read and many activities were canceled. Bills were piling up instead of decreasing. The Pastor's salary was behind in payment and no solutions were offered in dealing with the debt, mostly due to unemployment.

In the third quarter of 1934, Grace's financial balance was, again, in the red by \$5.59. Mr. A.B. Kiser paid this debt out of his own pocket. On March 7, 1934, we were able to pay the collateral note taken out in 1928 for street assessment, in full. In 1935, Mr. A.B. Kiser's son, Clyde Kiser, who was living and working in New York City, sent \$30.00 to help with our financial situation.

On November 10, 1936, Rev. Yount married Rena Bertie Simmons, of Newton, NC. He resigned as Pastor, effective October 24, 1937, after accepting a call to a church in Hollywood, Florida. After his departure, the North Carolina Synod discontinued its Mission contribution to Grace. So as you can see, when it rains, it pours!!!

Even though Grace was struggling through these hard times, we still managed to help others less fortunate than us in the community. The Depression brought many tears to the eyes of our congregation, but it did not stop the ladies circles from donating food, clothes, coal for heat and basic necessities to many poor families; bitter sweat tears in an otherwise gloomy time.

In a congregational meeting on February 13, 1938, a vote was passed to call Rev. George W. McClanahan of Granite Quarry, NC at a salary of \$800.00 per year. The call was accepted April 1, 1938. Thus, Rev. McClanahan became our eighth Pastor. He was the first to become fully supported financially by Grace. He had recently retired and was willing to accept the modest salary that we could afford. He, and wife Delia, was well liked by members of the congregation. During his tenure, the original church building was improved upon by the addition of Sunday school rooms, running water and sewer and the installation of central heating in 1939.

On June 14, 1942, a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Rev. McClanahan was held at Grace. Dr. J.L. Morgan, President of the NC Synod, participated in the program. Two years later, in 1944, Rev. McClanahan was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Roanoke College.



Sunday October 25, 1942

Row 1- Mary Dobbins, Eva Carpenter, Ruth Best, D. J. Keeter, Pauline Caldwell, Ruth Coon Dameron, Alna Kiser

Row 2 - Lena Carpenter, Alma Coon, Anna Foster Caldwell, Mary Coon Wallace, Alfred Moretz

Row 3 - Pastor G. W. McClanahan, Alfred Best, Madison Dameron, David Coon, Crown Hovis, Miles Rhyne

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

A few months after the close of World War II, January 20, 1946, the congregation voted to build a new, brick church. A committee consisting of Carl G. Carpenter, E.L. Froneberger, R.L. Lewis and M.C. Mauney was elected to explore the possibilities regarding a site and plans. However, due to the post-war scarcity of building materials and high costs, there was a delay in starting the building until well after Rev. McClanahan's retirement in January of 1948.

Without a Pastor, the church Council met to discuss the vacancy. Councilman Alfred Best, Principle of Bessemer City High School, knew of a teacher at the school whose husband was a Lutheran minister. Eva Rimmer and her husband Rev. Paul Rimmer, resided in Cherryville. Alfred suggested that Grace offer Pastor Rimmer \$100 a month salary. Pastor Rimmer accepted, thus becoming our ninth Pastor in 1948.

Pastor Rimmer witnessed the beginning of the new brick church building in September of 1949, on a lot located at N. 14th Street and Washington Avenue. The lot had been given to the church by Lena and Carl Carpenter. Pastor Rimmer and Rev. F.L. Conrad, President of the North Carolina Synod, conducted the cornerstone laying service on November 26, 1950. The church was formally opened for services November 5, 1951.

The total cost of the church building was about \$65,000. Furnishings for the church became a major concern because of our limited budget. So, the stained-glass windows and pews were paid for by individual contributions. Names of those who paid for windows were placed on markers under each window, while the names of those who bought pews were placed on a plaque located in the Narthex. The Miriam Miller Missioary Society sponsored a drive for an organ for the church. On December 6, 1950, a Hammond organ was purchased and dedicated. At the same time, the organ chimes, which were given by the R.L. Lewis family, were also dedicated.

The old church building and lot was sold in 1950 to R.L. Lewis and Carl Carpenter. The proceeds were applied to the new church building's balance. The new church was completed and fully furnished in early 1951 with a remaining debt of \$19,000. The first Baptism to be held in the new building was that of Ronald Burleson, son of Bernell and Lonnie Burleson on March 10th. The first marriage in the new church building was that of Ralph Theodore Mauney to Laurie Jeanne Rhyne on May 13, 1951. Pastor Paul Rimmer left Grace in 1952.

On September 1, 1952, Pastor H.P. Barringer accepted our call and became our tenth Minister. Pastor and Mrs. Barringer, and their two sons Paul and Larry, came to us from St. Paul's Lutheran church in Salisbury. Pastor Barringer inherited a "brand-new" church, with a balance of \$19,000 left on the building.

On October 3, 1954, Grace celebrated its 50th Anniversary! Mr. Augustus B. Kiser read his history of the church. Three living charter members were honored along with eight other members who had reached the age of 75+. The three living charter members were: Henry Rhyne, Earnest L. Froneberger and Mrs. Robert Payne. On this date, a collection was taken towards the building debt. During Pastor Barringer's tenure, the building debt was paid in full. A ladies group, the H.P. Barringer Circle, was formed and named in his honor.



Pastor & Mrs. Barringer - 1954

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

On March 4, 1956, Pastor Barringer prepared and delivered his last sermon. During that week, he passed a way. Pastor Barringer was, and is, the only Minister of Grace to pass during his tenure. Mrs. Edna Barringer, in a letter to the church, wrote in part:

“You cannot know, and we cannot tell or express in words, how kind and thoughtful everyone has been, but we want these few simple words to remind you that you have been the most patient, kind, understanding and loving congregation any pastor ever served for three and one half years. Thank you for making his last few years happy ones. No humble servant was ever more highly honored. May peace, mercy, and faith abound and may god bless you everyone.”

Please continue to pray for us...
Gratefully and sincerely,

—Edna, Paul and Larry Barringer

The Barringer family continued to live in Bessemer City following Pastor Barringer’s death, purchasing a home on Texas Avenue. Edna Barringer remained a member of Grace until her death in 1989. Today, Larry and his wife Jo Ann (Noblett) reside in Bessemer City in the old “country” home formally owned by Lena and Carl Carpenter on Lewis Farm road. Paul resides in Humble, Texas.

On April 8, 1956, Rev. Paul Rimmer and Dr. Conrad, President of the N.C. Synod, delivered the service celebrating the church loan being paid in full. Later that month on the 22nd, Cyrus F. Frazier, Jr., a Senior from Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC, conducted the service at Grace! (Young Cy Frazier did not realize that he would play an important role in the future of Grace after retirement!).

Rev. George G. Robertson became the eleventh pastor of Grace on December 10, 1956. He delivered his first sermon on December 16th. Shortly after his arrival, the Frank Gray property, which adjoined the church lot on the east side, became available. The council, consisting of Madison Dameron, Luther Dameron, Flay Anthony, Bill Morris, Carl Carpenter, Robert L. Lewis, Amos Best, Charles Wallace and Don Ratchford, voted to purchase the property for \$10,000. The old frame house on the lot was used for Sunday school classes for three years. On August 18, 1957, work began on a marquee/ bulletin board for the front lawn of the church. This was erected as a memorial to the late Pastor H.P. Barringer.

On April 26, 1959, the church voted to replace the dwelling with a new brick educational building. The contract for the new building was awarded to Mr. Earl Rhyne, a member of the congregation, by the building committee. Members of the committee were: Eugene Froneberger (Chairman), Alfred Best, M.C. Mauney (Treasurer) and Pastor Robertson. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 10, 1959. Rev. Robertson was assisted in conducting the service by Rev. E.L. Misenheimer, Assistant to the President of the NC Synod. The educational building was completed in August of that year at a cost of \$21,190.

On March 31, 1962, Seminarian Edwin Ricks accepted the call to become the twelfth pastor of Grace. On June 8th, the congregation held a “pounding “ to welcome Pastor Ricks. The congregation consisted of 189

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members. He was ordained and installed as Pastor by July 15, 1962. Pastor Ricks was especially interested in the youth and their activities. He did much for the young people of the church and the youth of the community.

At the Sixtieth anniversary service, on September 15, 1963, Ms. Alna Kiser prepared a brief history of Grace taken from her father's (A. B. Kiser) notes. She distributed this written work to members and friends. Living charter members, Mr. Earnest Froneberger and Mr. Henry Rhyne were honored. Others who were recognized were: Mrs. G.I. Beam, Mrs. John Dameron, Mrs. A.J. Grier, Mr. & Mrs. A.B. Kiser, Ms. Annie Lineberger, Mr. M.C. Mauney, Mrs. Annie Neal and Mr. Miles Rhyne.

Glenn Pasour became our church Treasurer. Average Sunday School attendance was 99 out of 183 total members. Sunday School teachers were: **Pre-school**—Ruth Best with Gladys McNair, Asst.; **Grades 1-3**—Peggy Pearson with Ralph Harmon, Asst.; **Grade 4**—Edna Barringer with Betty Jo Morris, Asst.; **Grades 5-6**—Joyce O'Brien with Dot Costner, Asst.; **Grades 7-9**—Reggie O'Brien with Walline Best, Asst.; **Grades 10-12**—Willie Leonhardt with Amos Best, Asst.; **Young Adults**—Donald Deal with Alfred Best, Asst.; **Men's Class**—F.B. Lutz with Miles Rhyne, Asst.; **Women's class**—Madison Dameron with Eva Carpenter, Asst.

On December 8, 1963, Alice Carolyn Schofield and infant son, James Christopher, were baptized. New members received were: Joyce Ballard O'Brien and Ruby Lee Pendleton, both through adult confirmation. Mr. & Mrs. George Lewis and son, George, Jr.; Mr. & Mrs. Earl Arledge and daughter, Teresa; and Francis Louise Morrow were received through Letters of Transfer. On December 29, Carlos Dameron, Jr. was welcomed as a newly confirmed member.

By 1964, our membership rose to 195 baptized members! John Kevin O'Brien, infant son of Mr. & Mrs. Reggie O'Brien, became a new member by sacrament of Holy Baptism. This is our largest membership on record. Other interesting facts about the year, 1964, were: new asbestos tile was installed in the basement for \$710. On April 5, new candlesticks for the altar were dedicated to Grace by friends in memory of Mr. R.L. Lewis. A pew was given in memory of Mr. Lawrence G. Rhyne by Mrs. L.G. Rhyne and by Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Mauney, Jr. Mr. & Mrs. Dave Coon, Mrs. John Dameron and Mr. Gene Froneberger also gave monetary gifts to purchase pews in memory of Mr. Henry Rhyne.

On April 23, 1964, a newsletter was started. The "Lamplighter", under Pastor Eddie Ricks' supervision, was prepared every quarter by various committees. It included important information concerning activities of the congregation. One highlight was the Pastor's message, a letter to the congregation called the "Fireside Chat".

With membership at a high level, 1965 saw many committees that were active in decision making and running the church. These committees were as follows:



Pastor Edwin L. Ricks greets Ernest L. Froneberger, 85 at the 60th anniversary observance.

1965 Standing Committees

Church Council

Mrs. Coon, Chair
George Lewis
Glenn Paysour
Donald Deal
Willie Leonhardt
Reggie O'Brien
Alna Kiser
Luther Dameron
Gene Froneberger

Education

Gladys McNair, Chair
Peggy Pearson
Betty Jo Morris
Gladys Anthony
Joyce O'Brien
Flay Anthony
Luther Dameron

Stewardship

Flay Anthony, Chair
Peggy Pearson
Betty Jo Morris
Jack McNair
Robert Ross
Donald Deal
Alna Kiser

Worship & Music

Donald Deal, Chair
Lena Carpenter
Mary Dobbins
Gladys McNair
Dot Costner
Ralph Harmon

Evangelism

Mary Alice Rhyne, Chair
Madison Dameron
George Lewis
Margie Dameron
Willie Leonhardt
Earnest Best
Eva Carpenter
Edna Barringer

Finance

Carl Carpenter, Chair
Glenn Pasour
Reggie O'Brien
George Lewis
Carlos Dameron
Alfred Best
Mrs. Zoe Plonk
Mrs. William Morris

Social Ministry

Ruth Beam, Chair
Mrs. David Coon
Clyde Lutz
Mrs. R.L. Lewis
Robert Ross

Church Property

Luther Dameron, Chair
Gene Fronberger
George Lewis
Clyde Lutz

Rev. George W. Shuford became our thirteenth Pastor of Grace in 1966. At his suggestion, the church council appointed a committee to explore the advisability of building a new parsonage. After much discussion concerning whether or nor to build a new parsonage or continue to repair the old one (on Washington Ave.), it was decided on November 20, 1966 to sell the old parsonage to James Kiser, and build a new one. The old parsonage was used for 40 years. Rent was paid to Mr. Kiser, \$60 per month, for Pastor Shuford and family to live there until a new one was constructed.

On January 1, 1967, the congregation voted to purchase a lot on Bess Town Road from Arvin and Jack Costner for a new parsonage. The Building Committee included: George Lewis, Chairman, Alfred Best, Treasurer, Clyde Lutz, Eva Carpenter and Flay Anthony, Liaison to the contractor. On March 2nd, Pastor Shuford announced that a contract for construction had been awarded to Jack Kiser. It was built in twelve

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weeks. The final cost was \$29,300! On June 18th, an open house was held at the new Parsonage from 2:30-4:30. The Shuford family moved into the new house on June 30, 1967.

Interesting facts in 1967: On May 3 Ralph Eric Harmon was born. On May 18th, Traci Michelle Hager was born. On November 4, Michael Timothy O'Brien was born. All are current members who remain active in many activities today. There were three ladies' groups active in Grace: The Jessie Froneberger Society, the H.P. Barringer Circle and the Delia McClanahan Circle.

In 1968, Pastor Shuford accepted the Editorship of the *North Carolina Lutheran*. He held this position and responsibilities in addition to his Pastoral duties at Grace. He resigned in July of 1969 and for several months, Dr. Leroy E. Blackwelder served as our Supply Pastor. 1968 marked the passing of several important members of Grace. Mr. A.B. Kiser was a long-time member, historian and Treasurer (23 years). He was instrumental in keeping the church information from 1930 to 1953. Earnest L. Froneberger was the last of the original 18 charter members of Grace. He passed away June 24, 1968. With their passing, an epoch of the church history came to a close.

In December of 1969, Pastor G. David Swygert accepted our call to become our fourteenth pastor. He was installed February 8, 1970. A tea and pounding was given in honor of Pastor Swygert and family, after the morning worship service. He and his wife, Marilyn quickly became active workers in the church. Their interest in children was manifested in the many youth activities and in their work on behalf of foster children. The Swygerts, who helped spearhead the formation of the "North Carolina Association of Foster Parents", cared for many foster children in their home. Pastor Swygert served as the first President of the group.

We had many "firsts" during the 10 1/2 years the Swygerts were with us. Under the direction of Marilyn Swygert, the women of Grace made "Chrismon" ornaments for our first "Chrismon" tree. The scent of the freshly cut tree hung in the air inside the church sanctuary all month long. The term, "Crismon" combines the two words, Christ and monogram. All ornaments' designs are symbols and letters referring to Christ. The "Chrismon" symbols guidebook was prepared by the women of the church, with Joyce O'Brien providing the illustrations. All of the symbols used in making the ornaments were passed down through the centuries of Christian history. All of the designs are made of white and gold, to symbolize the purity and majesty of the Son of God! The small white lights on the tree represent Christ who is the Light of the world. The green tree symbolizes life, especially the new life that Christ brings to us.

Pastor Swygert and Marilyn sure were organizers! Other "firsts" included the first "Mother-Daughter" Banquet, which was well received. Also, the first pictorial directory was published. All members' pictures, addresses and phone numbers were included.

In 1970 Flay Anthony was our Sunday school superintendent. Lena Carpenter was the organist. Memberships received that year were: J.V. Schuler, Peggy and Rush Costner and children, Mark and Niki; Pete and Marie Beck and daughter Julie; Bobbie and Tom Lineberger and children, Penny, Tommy, Tammy and Freddie; and Mrs. Arvin Costner. Baptisms included Mary Beth Best, infant daughter of Diane and Ben Best. Other adults received into membership were Pat Morris, Mr. & Mrs. Tommy Dameron, Diane Best, along with

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the Swygert family. Weddings in 1970 were Marilyn Hook to Alfred Best, Jr., and Jackie McNair to Lewis Carpenter. Lost to death were Randy Costner, Ferrie Greer, A.B. Lutz and Annie Lineberger.

1970 was full of family activities. At a family night covered dish dinner, a program “What’s a Family For?” was presented with sixty-five members present. In November, a spaghetti supper was held, and afterward, Advent wreaths were made by each family present for the upcoming Advent season. Some wreaths were made for the “shut-in” members of Grace. Fifty members attended. In December, a Christmas play was performed. The play, “O Holy Night”, was lead by Walline Best, with treat bags given to the children following refreshments. Fruit baskets were carried to the shut-ins by our Christmas carolers. The “live” nativity scene was organized by Gladys McNair that year, with Peggy Pearson serving hot cocoa and refreshments.

On July 7, 1971, our church chartered a bus to Lutheridge. There, we participated in the worship service. Forty-five members attended. Several gifts were given to the church that year. A funeral pall by Anita Morris and family. A processional cross was given by Mr. & Mrs. Carl Ware and family. Candlelights were given to the church by Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Lutz, and a Lectern Bible was donated by Mr. & Mrs. Fred Jenkins.

In 1972, new church paraments were donated by the Morris family and friends, in memory of William Morris. The church parsonage was painted this year, and the church Sanctuary was wallpapered.

On August 17, Al Froneberger conducted the church service while Pastor Swygert was on vacation. It was a very hot day. The church had no air conditioning, so the front doors were left open to let a breeze come inside. “Buttons”, Kevin and Michael O’Brien’s little beagle dog, had followed their scent up the sidewalk to the church door. After sticking his nose inside to look, “Buttons” began strolling down the aisle looking for the boys. The dog walked all the way to the altar as the congregation “snickered” during the sermon! Everyone had a good laugh, and Reggie O’Brien escorted the dog home!

Several trips were taken by the congregation members in 1973. Again, 43 members chartered a bus to Lutheridge for the worship service, a meal, and various other fun activities. This trip was organized and planned by Glenn Pasour. On another trip, a group from Grace traveled by bus to Columbia, SC to tour the Southern Seminary. Along with the tour, they attended a worship service, watched a filmstrip, and had a picnic dinner.

In 1973 a focus on money management was headed by Pastor Swygert. He recommended that we start a fund to reduce the parsonage debt, which was \$16,447.00. Each week, members earmarked donations specifically for this fund in the offering.

In November of 1973, another “first” was introduced by the Swygerts. Pastor Swygert’s interest in the aged was not restricted to only those members of our congregation. He also wanted to reach out to the elderly members of the community. Pastor Swygert initiated plans to have Grace’s Educational building serve as the headquarters for the greater Bessemer City area “Meals On Wheels” chapter. Meals were prepared in our kitchen, and distributed by volunteers to the shut-ins and elderly who were unable to cook their own meals. These volunteers visited and talked to the elderly, which for some, was there only outside contact. By May 12, 1974, (in just six months!) the “Meals On Wheels” program expanded from fourteen people to twenty-five people receiving meals each day!



Easter Sunday 1974

L to R 1st Row - Betty Jo Morris, Barbara Potter, Lena Carpenter, Gladys McNair

2nd Row - Tom Lineberger, Peggy Pearson, J. V. Schular, Eva Carpenter

3rd Row - Flay Anthony, Pastor David Swygert, Madison Dameron, Ralph Harmon

One particular "Family Night" dinner that stands out featured a program of "Bible Show-and-Tale". Each family brought an object that was mentioned in a Bible verse. Everyone was given an opportunity to guess where the object was used in the Bible. A member of the family then read the passage of scripture containing the object!

In 1975, the Church Council consisted of Lonnie Burlison (President), Rush Costner, Ralph Harmon, Tom Lineberger (Treasurer), Peter Beck, Glenn Pasour, Betty Jo Morris, Madison Dameron and Clyde Kiser. Alna & Clyde Kiser served as the Financial Secretaries. Average Sunday attendance was seventy-one. Members received were Jack and Carolyn Priest and Children Gerald, Elizabeth (Sissy), Stephen and Sarah; Mr. & Mrs. Dan Wise and son, Mark; and Mrs. Wanda Harmon. Lost in death were Annie Neal, Mrs. B.A. Anthony and Flay Anthony. 1975 also marked the hiring of Mr. Robert (Bob) Sumler, who began Custodian duties. Mr. Sumler, who served as our custodian for many years, was always remembered as a pleasant man, who always offered a smile and greeted everyone with a nod.

In 1976, several more "firsts" were observed at Grace. On April 17, during the Easter season, a butterfly party was held. All members drew butterflies on the church sidewalks using colored chalk. This represented the beginning of new life, just as a butterfly emerges from its cocoon in it's new form, Christ promises us new life and forgives our sins. Several weeks later, balloons filled with helium, were released in the parking lot. These balloons contained scriptures and information about our church. Over one hundred balloons were released in the air that Sunday, spreading the word of God!

In September of 1974, Marilyn Swygert started Grace's first weekday church school program. This program, entitled "The Purple Puzzle Tree", was open to children from ages 3 years old to Sixth grade. Eighteen children (13 from Grace) met once a week on Thursday afternoon in the church basement. They had Bible study, studied characters from the Bible, ate snacks and made crafts. Marilyn Swygert and Wanda Anthony were in charge of the school.

Also in 1974, a Youth choir was reformed by Paneen Froneberger. Robes were made and donated by Barbara Potter. A fund was also started to purchase new adult choir robes. There was one wedding during the year. On October 19, 1974, Susan Alexander married Alvin Lutz (son of Frances and Clyde Lutz).

In 1975, Barbara and David Jenkins and children, Holly and Ryan, moved back to Bessemer City and joined Grace. David, son of Lillian (Dot) Jenkins, was a pilot for US AIR and was based in Virginia. Barbara began to help with the weekday church school along with Carolyn Priest and Walline Best. The Jenkins family were members of Grace from 1975-1985.

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In the Bessemer City Christmas parade, Grace interred our first “float”, featuring the nativity scene. Tom Lineberger was in charge of decorating our entry. Ralph Harmon cut the trees used for Christmas from his property. Weekday church school children decorated a tree in their basement classroom. The Youth group decorated the tree used in the Educational building, and Paneen Froneberger was in charge of decorating the Chrismon tree in the Sanctuary. Paneen Froneberger also directed a Christmas program performed by the youth. A Christmas Cantata was presented by the choir and narrated by Al Froneberger.

On December 23rd, Grace chartered a bus to carry 50 Christmas carolers to sing in the community and at several nursing homes. Fruit baskets were given away at each stop. After caroling, the group was invited to the home of Beth & Ralph Harmon for a weenie roast and hot cocoa. Ralph would begin preparing for the bon fire early in the day by cutting wood for the fire, by gathering sticks, sharpened on one end for the weenies to cook, and then burning the fire down to coals. By the time the hungry carolers arrived, the fire would be just right for cooking!

Baptisms during 1976 were: Dereck Neal, Marci Leigh Froneberger and Daniel Hansen Beck. Confirmations included Gerald Priest, Sissy Priest, Tammy Lineberger and Niki Costner. Deaths included Mrs. Beulah O’Brien Gamble and Mrs. Alda Lutz.

In 1977, Grace accomplished many good things! “Meals On Wheels” continued to use our kitchen facilities Monday through Friday. By borrowing \$12,000, The church parking lot was paved, air conditioning was installed in the Educational Building, and a heat pump and air conditioning unit was installed in the parsonage. Much needed repairs were done to the walls and ceilings in the church basement by Ralph Harmon and others.

Vacation Bible School was held in June, with the theme being “The Good News Tree”. Carolyn Priest and Joyce O’Brien served as co-directors. A large tree, with eyes and a mouth, was constructed in the middle of the educational building meeting area. There was a tape recorder inside the tree’s mouth. The children would sit around the tree to hear stories and lessons. The younger children really thought the tree was talking! A very large turnout was present each evening.

On September 18, 1977, Michael Luther Swygert, son of Pastor & Mrs. Swygert, was received into membership by Holy Baptism. In October, we paid off the parsonage debt! On December 11, we celebrated a Mortgage burning ceremony, with a fellowship dinner following the service.

Our activities during the Christmas holidays were numerous and very fulfilling! Fellowship abounded! Once again, Grace sponsored a Christmas float in the town parade. Betty Leonhardt was in charge of making advent wreaths. Bobbie Lineberger and Barbara Jenkins were in charge of the live Nativity scene. Christmas carolers that year rode in truck beds, filled with hay, then proceeded to the Harmon’s home for the annual weenie roast. Lost by death in 1977: Carl G. Carpenter and Mrs. Alfred (Ruth) Best.

In 1978, Lena Carpenter (organist) and Paneen Froneberger (choir director) worked especially hard in helping the congregation become acquainted with the new Lutheran Book of Worship (the green hymn book) introduced that year. Emphasis was placed on introducing new hymns through special programs, cantadas and during the morning worship service.

Carolyn Priest and Gladys McNair lead the Education and Ministry committee. The Lutheran Men’s group financed a picnic, in honor of the Sunday school teachers and assistants, at the home of Beth & Ralph Harmon. The following people were recognized on September 23rd: Beth Harmon, Tess Mercer, Marie Beck, Ruby Philbeck, Carolyn Priest, Sissy Priest, Kathy Potter, Tammy Lineberger, Wanda Anthony, Bobbie Lineberger,

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Paneen Froneberger, Joyce O'Brien, Betty Jo Morris, Reggie O'Brien, Madison Dameron, J.V. Schuler, Pastor Swygert, Willie Leonhardt, Tom Lineberger, Gladys McNair, Gladys Anthony, Bill Morris, Walline Best, Marilyn Swygert and Barbara Jenkins.

Ruby Philbeck and Carolyn Priest were editors of a monthly newsletter entitled: "Christian Scribblings". The newsletter reported on the church council meetings, church activities, news, a recipe corner and featured a congregation member in a "Personality of the Month" column! Bill Morris was chairman of the Support Committee, which was responsible for building maintenance projects. Installation of a ramp and handrails, from the parking lot to the front door, was completed. This allowed easier access to the church for all. The window frames in the basement were beginning to rot. This project was completed almost single handedly by Ralph Harmon. The Support Committee discussed permanent storm window coverings for our priceless leaded stained glass windows. This would protect the windows from the weather, vandalism and be more efficient by acting as insulation against the cold and heat.

The marriage of Alfred Best to Jo Ford Brumley took place in Statesville in April of 1978. Mrs. Jo Best was welcomed into membership at Grace on May 28th. On September 10th, Christopher Andrew Lutz, infant son of Susan and Alvin Lutz, was christened. On November 19th, Traci Michelle Hager was welcomed into membership by Holy Baptism.

On February 17, 1979, the congregation held a special "family night" dinner in honor of Pastor Swygert. A box of money was presented to him to show our appreciation of his ten years of service at Grace. During this year, Lena Carpenter bought new, wine robes for both the youth and adult choirs. This gift was given in memory of her husband, Mr. Carl Carpenter. The level of interest and dedication by both choirs were outstanding. Barbara Potter acted as assistant choir director, as well as assistant organist to Lena Carpenter. Both were demanding jobs. Paneen Froneberger, again was the choir director, as well as the chairman of the Worship and Music Committee.

A set of handbells was dedicated on December 9, 1979 in memory of Madison Dameron. This set, which included twenty-five bells, was given by family and friends in honor of Mr. Dameron, who passed away January 15th, earlier that year. The bells brought much inspiration and joy to the congregation, and continue to do so today.

Grace closed out the "Seventies" with a very productive year. Grace gained fifteen new members, while losing four. Baptized were: Mrs. Debbie Linberger on (October 21), Nicole Susanne Wallace, infant daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Bruce Wallace (November 18), Christopher David Lewis, infant son of Amy & Norman Lewis (November 25). Affirmation of Baptism was observed by, Beth & Kent Leonhardt and son, Brayton (June 24), Dr. & Mrs. Bruce Wallace, Mrs. Jane Kaiser and sons, John and Robbie (November 11). Joining Grace by "Letter of Transfer" were: Billie & Fred Thompson (Shepherd of the Sea Lutheran Church—Garden City, SC on July 29), Amy & Norman Lewis (Lutheran Chapel—Gastonia on October 14). Members confirmed on April 8, 1979 were Chris Philbeck, Steve Priest, Kevin O'Brien and Myra Morris. Married on August 4th—Debbie Louann Dixon to Tommy Lineberger.

In 1980, Lena and Eva Carpenter gave a special gift of new carpet for the Sanctuary as a memorial to Carl Carpenter. Up until this point, the church had always had hardwood floors. The dark red carpet not only added a royal look to the church, but also reduced the noise level to better hear the service. Another addition to our church was the purchase of a new, 500 digital Allen Organ. This was a "state-of-the-art" instrument that really enhanced the musical sound.

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In 1981, Tom Lineberger was church Treasurer, Susan Lutz was Financial Secretary and Ron Potter and J V. Schuler served as communion assistants to the Pastor. On April 24, pew cushions were given to the church by the Morris and Lineberger families in memory of Anita Morris and Tammy Lineberger.

On May 22, 1981, Pastor Swygert submitted his resignation in order to accept a call to Organ Lutheran Church in Salisbury, NC. With much regret, Grace accepted his resignation. A “Letter of Transfer” for Pastor Swygert, Marilyn, George and Martha, was written. Pastor Swygert, and family, served Grace for ten and a half years!

On June 1, 1982, Pastor Dennis L. Setzer, Jr. became our 15th minister at Grace. He was introduced at a covered dish social, also honoring our two High School Senior graduates: Myra Morris and Kevin O’Brien. He, his wife, Jeanne, and their four sons, Denny, Kirk, Trevor and John resided in Lincolnton. Pastor Setzer was called for a one-year term. Therefore, the Setzers remained in their home in Lincolnton. The parsonage was rented to a new doctor in town from Canada, Dr. & Mrs. Lee D. Barro. The Setzer’s immediately became an active part of our church family. Pastor Setzer brought to Grace a cheerful and witty personality, which drew the congregation to him, especially the younger members. When he stepped behind the pulpit, his sermons were well prepared and delivered with zeal! Pastor Setzer possessed a special ability to hold your attention during his sermons. His use of analogies, relating biblical stories to similar stories of today made his sermons more effective and understandable.

On May 8, 1983, Pastor Setzer was permanently called to lead our congregation. One of his first orders of business was the marriage of Robin Falls to Rick Hagar on June 18th. On June 26th, he was installed. The Setzers, then, decided to move to Bessemer City to live in the parsonage. His interest in the community flourished after the move. He became Vice President of the Bessemer City Ministerial Association. His four boys entered school here, joined the local baseball and soccer teams and met many new friends. These new relationships led to new members for Grace, and one of the largest Sunday school classes and Youth Groups that Grace has experienced!

Due to the enthusiasm from Pastor Setzer, and the continued hard work from Paneen Froneberger, the youth and handbell choir became a focus of our church service. A new Allen Organ was purchased in March of 1983. This 500 Digital component organ was considered “top-of-the-line” and was something our little church was very proud of. Paneen organized new youth programs, music classes, and directed plays which made the youth’s participation a more interesting experience. Wooden “Orff” instruments were purchased and played by the youth. These instruments were the focal point of many musical programs presented to the congregation.

The youth choir’s interest and motivation was apparent as concert band instruments were incorporated into the hymns and cantatas. Many youth brought their instruments from home and played each Sunday. Eddie Harmon and Denny Setzer played saxophone, Julie Beck played her flute, Traci Hagar and Michelle Hall played clarinet, Renee Philbeck played bass clarinet, Michael O’Brien played drums and guitar, Kevin O’Brien played guitar and Paneen Froneberger played guitar.

On May 13, 1984, Lena Carpenter was honored with a plaque for her outstanding accomplishments as organist and LCW Treasurer for Grace. Also in 1984, Susan Lutz became church Treasurer to add to the existing duties of Secretary.

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In 1985 the North Carolina Synod chose Grace as one of three churches in the Synod to be a pattern congregation for the conference and “Camping Ministries Campaign Appeal”. A piano was dedicated to Grace in loving memory of Mrs. Alma Pearson by her children and loved ones. Storm windows were installed in the Educational building. This expense was funded through the Rufus Plonk, Sr. memorial.

Grace experienced several transitions in the next few months. On August 4th, Susan Lutz resigned as our church secretary/treasurer. Terry Best was hired and assumed these duties on a 60-day trial bases. Terry worked for five years, left for two years on maternity leave (Jessica!), then returned as Secretary. Jessica Lynn Best was christened on 7/14/85. Terry remains our secretary to this day, as well as our treasurer. Also in 1985, Gladys McNair was hired as our custodian. Bessemer City High School Seniors who graduated that year were Traci Hagar and Renee Philbeck. On September 15, 1985, we celebrated our 82nd Homecoming service with Pastor David Swygert returning to lead the service.

On January 5, 1986, Pastor Dennis Setzer resigned from Grace. He accepted a call to Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Concord, NC. On the 26th of that month, our congregation gave the Setzer’s a farewell dinner. On April 23rd, Pastor Robert Shelby became our Interim Pastor. On June 18th, the Allen organ debt was paid in full. A special dedication was held during the morning worship service on July 27th. Paneen Froneberger presented Lonnie Burleson, Council President, with a copy of the paid agreement.

On July 1, 1986, Grace’s affiliation with the “Meals On Wheels” program ended. “Meals On Wheels”, which had used Grace’s kitchen for their nutrition site for twelve years, moved to Gastonia. We received a letter of appreciation from the group’s president, thanking us for many years of hard work.

Rev. Robert F. Mitschke, Jr. became our sixteenth Pastor on October 1, 1986. Pastor Mitschke, 34 years old, approached his calling to Grace with idealism and vigor. Supporting him, was his wife Anne, daughter Elisha and son “Butch”. The members of Grace welcomed Pastor Mitschke and family with an ice cream social. On November 16, Pastor Mitschke was installed by Asst. Bishop, Rev. Richard J. Goeres. After the service, a covered dish dinner was held.

Church Council members in 1986 were:

Lonnie Burleson (President)
Wanda Anthony (Secretary)
Terry Best (Treasurer/ Financial Officer)
Reggie O’Brien
Allen Huggins
J.V. Schuler
Tony Best
Ralph Harmon
Clyde Kiser
Peter Beck

The Council delegated Clyde Kiser to report a historical account of Grace to the Synod for a book that was being written on North Carolina Lutheran Church history. Several youth were honored in June as graduates of Bessemer City High School. Eric Harmon and Mike O’Brien were given baskets filled with goodies and necessities at a covered dish social. In a dedication on December 7th, new blue paraments and new alter vases were given in memory of Mr. & Mrs. M.C. Mauney by the Mauney family.

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In 1987, Boy Scout Troop 517 was chartered and sponsored by Grace. The troop was organized by Mr. Ronald Ashe (Scoutmaster), with the help of Pastor Mitschke. On May 17, Julie Michelle Best, daughter of Terri & Tony Best, was Christened. On May 31st, the youth of Grace conducted the morning worship service. That evening, an ice cream social was held, honoring our high school Seniors: Eddie Harmon, Julie Beck and Mary Beth Best. On December 6th, a dedication of a “home communion” set was donated by the Rufus S. Plonk, Sr. memorial during the morning worship service.

In April 1988, a covered dish dinner was held in honor of Lena Carpenter, who was moving back to her hometown of Granite Quarry, NC. Lena and husband Carl, were active and devoted Lutherans for many years, and served Grace to no end. Carolyn Priest, chairman of the Worship and Music committee, had a big task ahead of her in finding a full-time organist to replace Mrs. Carpenter. Barbara Potter graciously accepted, with Elisha Mitschke playing for anthems and at choir practice.

On May 22nd, a congregational picnic was held at the Kings Mountain state park to honor Amy Best, Katie Pasour and John Kaiser, who were baptized as adult members of Grace. Also honored were high school graduates Rendi Burleson and Michelle Hall. In July, an arts and crafts festival was held in the Educational Building. The ladies of the church made crafts and homemade cakes, cookies and other items. In October, a CPR class, sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood Association, was held at Grace. Many members attended this very helpful and informative class.

In June, “Vacation Bible School” was held at First Methodist Church. Grace Lutheran, as well as St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church participated and shared expenses. Teachers were selected from all three churches. Attendance was very high, given that children from all three congregations were involved.

Many projects were completed during the year. A gas weed trimmer and gas leaf blower was purchased for yard maintenance. In the Educational Building, the kitchen was re-wired, a programmable thermostat was donated, and a new roof was installed.

On November 6th, a service was held at Belmont Abby College in honor of All Saints Sunday. Choirs from area Lutheran churches joined together to perform this special program. Paneen Froneberger directed this event. After the service, the choir from Grace met for dinner. On November 20, 1988, Kelly Ann Harmon, daughter of Paige and Eric Harmon, was baptized.

The 1988 Advent season was again, very busy! The Crismon tree was decorated, and members enjoyed a family night Christmas dinner. The live nativity scene was held the week before Christmas. The youth of Grace were joined by the college students home for the holidays. Christmas carolers once again enjoyed the annual “weenie roast” held at the Ralph and Beth Harmon house.

In 1989, Debbie Lineberger became church secretary. Tom Lineberger was Council President. New gutters were installed on the Educational Building. The new church directories were presented in February. Photographs and information on all members were included. Average Sunday School attendance was forty, with seventy-five people attending the worship service each Sunday.

We had many “showers” during the year, and celebrated several weddings. On January 22nd, the Barringer & Ricks Circles gave Robin Hagar a baby shower (Megan). On April 9th, a bridal shower was held in honor of Angela Tunstall, bride-to-be of Kevin O’Brien. On April 29th, Angela and Kevin were wed, with a reception held in the Educational Building following the service. On June 4th, a baby shower for Elizabeth (Sissy) Priest Clemmer was held in the Educational Building. On June 11th, a bridal shower for Marilyn Ross was also given by the ladies of Grace. On July 8th, the wedding of Marilyn Ross to James Wooten took place. A reception then

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followed. We also had one Baptism. On October 8th, Holy Baptism was celebrated for William Andrew Clemmer, infant son of Sissy and Jeff Clemmer. He was born on July 17th.

On July 14, 1989, Edna Barringer passed. She was wife of H.P. Barringer, former Pastor of Grace. Long-time member, Margaret G. O'Brien, passed away on October 9. She was a member of Grace for over 75 years.

Grace completed many projects and had many socials during 1990. The metal railing for the sidewalk ramp was installed. The Council authorized borrowing \$1,460 to treat the church for termites. Lutheran Brotherhood matched \$450 to help meet this expense. Donations from church members totaled \$595. On September 30, 1990, Ralph Harmon donated a lighted cabinet that was used to display a Memorial Book in the Narthex. Ralph handmade this Memorial cabinet in his woodworking shop. The book lists all gifts given in memory of past members. Average attendance for Sunday School was 45 persons. Average attendance for the worship service was 130.

Vacation Bible School was held at First United Methodist Church, with four churches participating. Attendance each night averaged 137 people. Terry Best and Gladys McNair organized and planned the week's events. To celebrate the end of Bible School, a pool party and hotdog supper was held at the Bessemer City community swimming pool. One hundred and fifty-two people enjoyed this social!

At our 86th Annual Homecoming service on September 16th, Pastor Dennis Setzer returned to be our guest speaker. We celebrated with a covered dish dinner following the service. Fred Lineberger and Suzanne Bullard were married on Saturday March 3rd. Grace welcomed Kathryn Virginia Lineberger, infant daughter of Debbie and Tommy Lineberger by the sacrament of holy baptism on May 13th. Myra and Scott Ledbetter were congratulated on the birth of their daughter, Emily Caroline, 7lbs and 15 oz. on October 18th.



1990 86th Homecoming

Back Row: L to R - Mike O'Brien, Kirk Setzer, Denny Setzer, Eddie Harmon, Eric Harmon.

Front Row: L to R - Mary Beth Best, Lori Kirby, Paige Harmon, Julie (Beck) Scott, Amy Best

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Several gifts were given to the church in 1991. On January 6th, a dedication of a Processional Cross took place during the morning worship service. The cross was purchased from the O'Brien memorial and given in memory of Margie O'Brien. A gift of \$5000 was given in memory of Lester Beam. Four new dining tables were purchased using the Lutheran Brotherhood matching funds. Also, money from the fund was used to purchase "Revised Standard Version" Bibles for the church. Barbara and Ron Potter bought a new microwave oven for the kitchen.

In May, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church registered and supported Tommy Lineberger in the ELCA as a candidate for the ordained ministry. Grace is very proud of one of our own becoming a Lutheran minister! Pastor Tommy Lineberger is now the Minister at Faith Lutheran Church in West Columbia, SC.

Also in May, baskets were filled with items for our college-bound high school seniors, John Kaiser and Amy Best. A Lutheran men's softball team was organized by Mike O'Brien. The team played in the Kings Mountain Community Church League. A church picnic took place at the county park in Dallas where members enjoyed an afternoon of fun. The softball field was reserved for a friendly game. Baskets of food were spread for a pleasant picnic meal.

In September, Debbie Lineberger resigned as Secretary of Grace. On September 15th, Terry Best returned as our Secretary.

In 1992, the Lester Beam Memorial was used to obtain a new piano, to be used in the Educational building. A dedication service was held in memory of Lester Beam, and Elisha Mitschke played the piano during a reception that followed. The Lutheran Brotherhood matching funds were used to help purchase a piano for the church basement. This was used for the musical education of the youth and adult choir to practice. The balance of the money was used to purchase other hand instruments and music books.

Beth and Ralph Harmon purchased new blinds for the windows in the church basement. Joyce and Reggie O'Brien purchased a new, artificial Chrismon tree. Due to the hazard of fire and new insurance laws, we no longer could use a live tree.

On February 6, 1993, Rob Kaiser sponsored a blood drive at Grace in order to obtain the "Eagle Scout" designation. The singing group "New Vibrations" performed at our church on May 23rd. Elisha Mitschke was a member of this group. Jane Kaiser was responsible for organizing and inviting the group to perform at Grace.

Projects completed during 1993 included the painting of the women's bathroom in the Educational Building by Peggy Pearson. Gladys McNair applied a stenciled ivy pattern used as a border. A storage room at the rear of the Educational Building was added. This addition included a concrete floor, brick walls and a shingled roof.

On July 24th, Grace held a "Cristmas in July" bazaar. Craft items and baked goods were sold. An afghan, made by Terry Best, was raffled off. All proceeds went to the Fellowship committee.

On September 19th, we celebrated our 90th Annual homecoming. Pastor Paul Rimmer was our guest speaker. A newsletter, "Memories of Grace" was compiled and written by Terry Best for this event.

In December, a cookie jar project for our "shut-ins" was started. Tins filled with homemade cookies and sweets, were delivered by the women and men of the church to the elderly for their Holiday enjoyment.

In 1995, money from the Alma and Elva Kiser Memorial Funds was used to purchase a computer for the church office. This purchase marked Grace's first step into the computer age! Previously bulletins, newsletters

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and all other documents were prepared on a typewriter. Now, Grace has a fax machine and even has access to the internet!

In 1996, Grace sponsored a project called “The Pickle Jar”. Coins were collected and donated to Lutheran Family Services. Pastor Troutman came to Grace to help count the coins. In 1997, Grace, again, collected funds for Lutheran Family Services that totaled \$735.00.

On September 21, 1997, Tommy Lineberger, Seminarian student, was the speaker at our 94th Homecoming celebration.

In August of 1999, Pastor Fred Mitschke preached his last sermon at Grace. Pastor Mitschke accepted a call to Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, in Richfield, NC. Pastor Mitschke served our church for 13 years.

Pastor Cyrus F. Frazier, Jr. became our interim pastor that same month (August). Pastor Frazier, a retired Lutheran minister, served Good Shepherd, Mt. Holly, NC for the majority of his pastoral career.

In September of 1999, new front doors were made and installed by Ronald Burleson. Lonnie Burleson assisted his son with this project, which also included painting them red. The interior of the Educational Building was also given a fresh coat of paint.

The year 2000 was a very busy year at Grace. In January, a congregational meeting was held. The Rev. George Rhyne, from the N.C. Synod’s office, led the discussion about the process of calling a new pastor. In February, a Call Committee was formed. The Committee, as well as the Council, met with Bishop Leonard Bolick, who explained the duties of the Call Committee in detail. Committee members were:

Mary Alice Rhyne—Chair
Susan Wittman—Council Representative
Becky Wells
Lauren Ledbetter
Marjorie Dameron
Carlos Dameron
Eric Harmon
Mike O’Brien

On February 20, Summer Alexandra O’Brien, daughter of Angela and Kevin O’Brien, was received by Holy Baptism. After the service, a hot dog lunch was held to raise money for our youth to attend Confirmation camp. On March 19, Skyler Stevens, son of Heather and Eric Stevens, was received by Holy Baptism. Bobbie and Tom Lineberger returned to us by letter of transfer, and were accepted into membership of Grace! Dr. Clyde Kiser, longtime member, passed away in February.

Also in 2000, the secretary’s office was expanded by taking out a wall between the office and a Sunday school room. New carpet was installed in both the secretary’s office as well as the Pastor’s office. A fresh coat of paint was applied to the exterior trim of the Educational Building and the Sanctuary. The Bessemer City High School Masonry class replaced the block retaining wall at the side of the Sanctuary. Ceiling fans were donated by Lonnie Burleson and installed in the Educational Building.

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In September, the Barringer Circle was renamed the Bera Dameron Circle in honor and in memory of long time member and worker, Bera Dameron. A memorial garden was designed and planted at the entrance of the church, in her honor, along with a brass placard in memory of deceased Circle members.

On September 17, 2000, Pastor David Swygert was guest speaker at our 97th annual Homecoming celebration. One hundred people were in attendance! The next Sunday, September 24, the congregation voted to sell the parsonage. The Council informed the congregation that most pastors' today, preferred to receive a living allowance instead of staying in a home owned by the church. This would allow the Pastor and his/her family the option of renting a house or an apartment, and saving to buy their own house upon retirement. The money made from the sale of the parsonage could be used to supplement our budget to attract a permanent pastor to Grace.

Throughout 2000 and 2001, the Call Committee met and interviewed several pastoral candidates. Then, in March of 2001, the Call Committee interviewed and recommended to the Council that we call Rev. Leslie Barnett. On April 22nd a congregational meeting was held and a vote was passed to make that call.

Sunday, May 27th, was Pastor Cyrus Frazier's last day at Grace. A cookout was held at the home of Susan Wittman and Michael Flanigan in his honor. Pastor Frazier was presented several gifts by congregation members to express their gratitude and love for the time he spent at Grace. On June 3rd a reception was held in honor of Pastor Barnett. Pastor Barnett's ordination was held June 9th at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chapel Hill, NC. Lonnie Burleson, Dot Jenkins, Edith and Stanley Sims, Michael Flanigan, Elizabeth Harlow, Julie Best and Terri Best all made the trip to witness the ordination. Rev. Leslie Barnett became the first female pastor of Grace in its 98-year history. On July 15th, Pastor Barnett was installed as minister by Rev. George Rhyne.

On July 29th, Lexan panels were placed and secured over the stained glass windows over the front doors of the church. These last panels, purchased by Michael Flanigan, completed this project! Many thanks to all those who contributed to this endeavor. The congregation can rest assured that our beautiful stained glass will be preserved for many years!

On July 31st, photographs were taken of each member or family for our fourth Congregational Directory.

On September 30th, a breakfast was held in honor of Ralph Harmon. Ralph was presented a plaque acknowledging many years of service to Grace, in many different capacities. "Ralph Harmon Day" was enjoyed by the congregation as well as many of Ralph's family members who were in attendance.

On October the 4th, the Parsonage was sold to Mr. & Mrs. John Elswick. Funds from the sale were placed in an annuity. It was decided that the interest earned each year from the annuity would be added to our budget to help supplement a new pastor's salary.

On October 6th, a Bar-BQ cookout was held at the home of Edith and Stanley Sims and Lucy Smith. Stanley's brother, Ernest, brought his wood-burning grill that was made out of a 50 gallon barrel. Barbecued pork, beef and chicken was served, along with many other dishes and deserts! A large crowd was present, consisting of congregation members, friends, family, business associates and politicians!

On Sunday, October 24th, a Halloween party was held at the home of Charles Groves. A cookout was held, as well as games, a haunted trail, and spooky stories around a bonfire!

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

On November 15th, Pastor Leslie Barnett resigned as Pastor of Grace. On November the 18th, Pastor Cyrus Frazier agreed to return to Grace as our interim Pastor.

In December of 2001, many Christmas activities and events were enjoyed by the congregation. The “Chrismon” tree was placed in the sanctuary and decorated with the “Chrismon” ornaments. A soup and sandwich lunch was enjoyed after the tree was lighted. A Christmas Cantata was presented by the choir. A Christmas program, “Come To Bethlehem” was presented by the Youth Group and the Choir. The following Sunday, a Christmas open house was held at the Sims’ home. Edith and Lucy began decorating for this special occasion in October! Edith and Stanley’s two story home and Lucy Smith’s adjoining wing was decorated with a Christmas tree in every room! The Sim’s have made this an annual event, with a different overall theme each year. Refreshments, including shrimp cocktail, punch and an assortment of pickups, were served to all visitors.

On Sunday, December 11th, after an evening of caroling in the community, church members enjoyed a holiday cookout at the home of Charles Groves. Hotdogs and hamburgers were served, and marshmallows were enjoyed around an open fire!

In mid-December at the Christmas party held at the Flanigan home, Lonnie Burluson, President of the Church Council, asked Joyce and Reggie O’Brien if they would chair a Centennial Committee. This committee was to organize and plan the “100 year anniversary” activities that would take place during the 2003 calendar year. The O’Brien’s also agreed to lead the research of the church archives and compose a book on the history of Grace Lutheran Church. The Centennial Committee members are as follows:

Joyce O’Brien—Chair
Reggie O’Brien—Co-chair
Michael O’Brien
Mary Alice Rhyne
Lillian (Dot) Jenkins
Shirley Hager
Luther Dameron
Charles Groves
Angie O’Brien
Terri Best
Lonnie Burluson
Betty Jo Morris
Pastor Cy Frazier—Advisor

Our second annual “Hanging of the Greens” service was held December 18th. It was first introduced to us by Pastor Frazier in 2000. This is a service that celebrates the beginning of the Advent season with the sights and fragrances of fresh greenery. The “greens” were cut and prepared at the home of Susan Wittman and Mike Flanigan. Fresh greenery, pinecones and berries were taken from their woods and assembled to create garland and window sprays in the Flanigan garage. Pastor Cy brought his garland-making machine to create the long garlands that are placed over the front doors and the choir boxes. Refreshments were provided by Mike and Susan.

During the week of Christmas, Grace’s annual “Live Nativity Scene” was held for three consecutive nights. Refreshments, including hot cocoa, were served to the participants. The candle light service was held on Christmas Eve. This service, which includes Holy Communion, is one of our most attended services each year.

— *History and Life of the Congregation* —

2002 was an exciting and eventful year at Grace. Many marked improvements to the church facilities and grounds, increased participation, and an overall improved sense of fellowship was seen. The church council members were:

Mike O'Brien—President
Jane Kaiser—Vice-President
Terri Best —Secretary
Peter Beck—Financial Officer
Lonnie Burleson—Financial Officer
Dot Jenkins
Mike Flanigan
Todd Parker
Myra Ledbetter
Robin Hagar
Pastor Cy Frazier

Many events and activities were held during the year. During the season of Lent, a “Shrove Tuesday” pancake supper was held. The Fellowship Committee, lead by Charles Groves, decorated the Educational Building in a Mardi Gras theme. Tables were set with purple, gold and green dinnerware, and beautiful flower arrangements were placed throughout the room. Colorful beads and Mardi Gras masks were worn and coins and candy were placed on each table. Edith and Stanley Sims and Lucy Smith were the “honorary” pancake cooks! “Shrove Tuesday”, also known as “Fat Tuesday” is basically the day of preparation for Lent. The name “shrove” is derived from the word “shrive” or confess. The English custom of eating pancakes was suggested by the need of using up the eggs and fat which were prohibited articles of diet during the 40 days of Lent. The association of eggs with the celebration of Easter also comes from eggs being prohibited during fasting.

The Fellowship Committee planned an Italian Dinner next. The dining area was decorated with huge, Italian columns, baskets of red geraniums, red and white checkered tablecloths, an Italian flag, with Italian music as a backdrop. Lasagna, salads, Italian bread and deserts were served. 65 people were in attendance! Funds donated from this social were designated towards replacing the carpet in the Sanctuary.

In late Spring, the Ricks Circle sponsored a Yard and Bake sale in front of the O'Brien's business to raise funds for the publication of this “Centennial Book”. Angie O'Brien was project leader. This event was very successful. Over \$700 was raised! Participates included: Heather Stevens, Joyce O'Brien, Robin Hagar, Jane Kaiser, Myra Ledbetter, Elizabeth Harlow, Terri Best, Jessica Best, Angie O'Brien, Marie Beck, Reggie O'Brien, Mike O'Brien. Kevin O'Brien, Ricky Hagar and Charles Groves. Many congregation members made baked goods for the sale.

A 4th of July cookout and swim party was hosted by Susan Wittman and Mike Flanigan. Congregation members enjoyed the fellowship and good food, as well as swimming, playing horseshoes, and petting the horses and feeding the goats.

Many projects were also planned and goals achieved. In July, we had new tile flooring installed in the basement. The old tiles were removed because of water back up due to the outside drain being clogged. Because the old tiles were made of asbestos, a special crew had to remove the old flooring by vacuum, so our congregation would not be exposed to dangerous particles.

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The 99th Homecoming at Grace was held in September. Pastor Fred Mitschke was our guest speaker. One hundred people attended this service and the following covered dish dinner.

On October 22nd, a “Harvest Dinner” was sponsored by the Fellowship Committee. The dining area was decorated with pumpkins, orange and yellow chrysanthemums, Indian corn, red and green apples, gourds and hay bails. The menu consisted of three different types of chili beans, cornbread, salad and deserts. Hand painted Jack-o-lanterns, donated by Joyce O’Brien, were auctioned off with the proceeds going to the Centennial committee. Games were played, with Susan Wittman winning the apple-peeling contest, with the longest apple peel!

In November, work was started on replacing the old carpet in the church Sanctuary. The pews were removed and the alter area floor was refinished to its original hardwood surface. New red carpet was purchased with donated funds and installed. After installation, the men of the church replaced the pews back to their original locations. Many sore backs were nurtured over the upcoming holiday season!

In late November, a commemorative plate was designed and commissioned in honor of Grace’s Centennial celebration by Michael O’Brien. The decorative plate shows the church image in cobalt blue on a white background with a gold band at the plate’s edge. Inscribed on the plate is “Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bessemer City, NC, Centennial (1903-2003)”. The back of the plate includes a listing of all 17 Pastors of Grace, and the years they served. The plates were offered to all congregation members and are available for purchase.

Many other activities took place during the last quarter of 2002. A Halloween party and cookout at the home of Charles Groves, the Sims’ “open house”, the “live nativity scene”, Christmas caroling and weenie roast, Christmas cantata, the “Hanging of the Greens” service, a Christmas dinner hosted by the Fellowship Committee and the Christmas Eve candlelight service.

2003!!! One hundred years old!!! The Centennial Committee worked, silently, but diligently throughout the past year gathering information by researching the church archives and by interviewing longtime and former church members. Many plans for this year’s Centennial Homecoming Celebration in September have been made!

2003 Council members are:

Mike O’Brien—President
Robin Hager—Vice-President
Terri Best—Secretary
Lonnie Burleson—Financial Officer
Mike Flanigan—Financial Officer
Daniel Beck
Elizabeth Harlow
Angie O’Brien
Dot Jenkins
Myra Ledbetter
Pastor Cy Frazier

One project that had been on going throughout 2002 was an aluminum can drive. Congregation members collected many bags of cans to sell in order to raise funds for general church up-keep expenses. On a snowy

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Monday morning, February 17th, Reggie, Kevin and Michael O'Brien took the cans to C&C Scrap Iron, Kings Mountain and sold the cans for \$304.20. Imperial Machine, employer of Eric Harmon, also donated scrap aluminum and brass for this project.

Our social events began with our annual "Shrove Tuesday" pancake supper. An Easter egg hunt, sponsored by the Ricks Circle, was held on Saturday, April 19. Thirty people were present. A Hotdog lunch was provided

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper April 19, 2003
Mardi Gras Theme



Mardi Gras King Pastor Cyrus Frazier



Honorable Cooks - Lucy Smith, Edith and Stanley Sims



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by Youth Group Leaders, Paige and Eric Harmon. Prizes were awarded for number of eggs found as well as various other games played. Mickey Harlow, Julie Best and Kelly Harmon hid the eggs for the younger youth. Terri Best helped with the organization. Children in attendance were:

Toni Melton
Hunter Melton
Tyler Cox
Christopher Cox
Katie Cox
Katelyn Lovell
Alex O'Brien
Bryce Ledbetter
Skyler Stevens
Gregory Stevens

An Easter breakfast was held after the Sunrise Service. Eggs, bacon, sausage, grits, biscuits, juice and coffee were prepared by our fine chefs, Edith and Stanley Sims and Lucy Smith and Angie O'Brien!

A graduation covered dish dinner was held May 4th in honor of our high school graduates, Lauren Ledbetter and Jessica Best. A pounding was collected and presented to them in preparation for their upcoming college experience.

A new "Call Committee" was formed and began work on the Pastoral search process. Members are as follows:

Rick Hager—Co-Chairman
Charles Groves—Co-Chairman
Peggy Pearson
Scott Ledbetter
Marie Beck
Jessica Best
J.V. Schuler
Mike O'Brien—Council Representative

Plans have been made for our "Centennial Homecoming Celebration" which is to take place on September 21, 2003! Bishop Leonard H. Bolick will be with us to lead our service. During this special service, Jessica Best and Micky Harlow will play trumpet, accompaniment during "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee". Julie Cox will play flute, accompanying the hymn "Amazing Grace". The Handbell choir will perform "Jesus Loves Me" during the offering. Julie Best will perform the anthem "How Beautiful" during Communion. After the service, the congregation will enjoy the "Homecoming Dinner". At this event, this Centennial History Book will be presented. Also, a Centennial plate featuring Grace Lutheran Church will be offered. On display, will be a picture scrapbook of old photos and memorabilia, as well as hymnals used by the congregation.

We have many people to thank in the congregation for their hard work, dedication, leadership and energy. Their perseverance has kept our little church marching on and on to serve our lord for 100 years.



Choir March 2003

1st Row L to R - Elizabeth Harlow, Peggy Pearson, Emily Ledbetter, Barbara Potter

2nd Row L to R - Micky Harlow, Marie Beck, Charles Groves, J. V. Schuler

3rd Row L to R - Mike O'Brien, Pastor Cyrus Frazier, Scott Ledbetter, Daniel Beck

We thank Pastor Cyrus Frazier for his leadership with our Epiphany, Lenten, Pentecost and Advent seasons. He has continued the old traditions of the spiritually uplifting Lutheran service. He introduced us to the “Hanging of The Greens” service, which added a new dimension to our Christmas worship. We all appreciate his positive attitude and the warmth he brings to our congregation.

We thank the Altar Guild volunteers who take time to make sure that our Alter is complete each Sunday by changing the paraments, preparing communion, placing the flowers and updating our hymnal boards. We appreciate our Ushers, Crucifers, Acolytes, Lectors, Communion Assistants and choir members. All have been very important in contributing to our worship service. We are thankful for the “Worship and Music “ committee and Barbara Potter (Music Director and Organist) who strive to provide an enjoyable and meaningful music program each Sunday. We are thankful to our Church Council for their leadership and support and all the decisions they make. We also appreciate all of our committees, Circles, Sunday School teachers, the Youth Group, lawn maintenance (Mike & Mickey Harlow) and our church secretary (Terri Best) who help keep the church running smoothly!

May the Lord bless us and keep us, may His face shine upon us and be gracious to us, may the Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace. May He lead our church for another 100 years, Amen!!!

The Men of the Church

When our church was formed one hundred years ago, men held all of the elected offices. They were responsible for all business transactions of the church, solved the problems, organized plans, voted and made most of the decisions. Through the years, the men have made great strides. From purchasing property and building the “little white church in 1904, constructing our present church in 1951, to installing new carpet in the Sanctuary in 2002, their accomplishments have been many.

The activities of the men have been dedicated and diverse. They have maintained the church structures and properties, cleaned the inside of the buildings and even cooked for the congregation. Not until 1962, did the women of the church hold office and begin to conduct church business. On December 23, 1962, Alma Pearson was the first woman to be installed on the Church Council. She served as Council Secretary for several years.

In the early days, the men of the church formed their own group, much like the women’s “circles”. They met once a month to discuss projects and needed maintenance around the church. Dinner would be served, and many times, a guest speaker would be invited to speak on various subjects. The group’s meetings also provided needed fellowship for the men.

The group’s name changed over the years. This was due to the Lutheran Churches changing affiliations and merging into different Synods. The men’s group was affiliated on the national Synod level, then to the state Synod level. In the early fifties, the group was known as “The Lutheran Men of North Carolina”. One of this group’s primary functions was that of the “Loan and Gift Fund”. Money was raised and placed in this fund to loan and donate to other churches, sometimes interest free. This enabled church’s “in need” to borrow money for repairs, additions, to build new parsonages or churches.

A delegate was sent to the annual convention that was usually held at different churches in various cities. J.V. Schuler and Lonnie Burleson both remember attending meetings in Concord, Salisbury, Lincolnton and Cherryville.

One of the first recorded men’s meetings was on September 2, 1945. The men met at 2:30 p.m., with Mr. F.B. Lutz leading the program. The topic of the program was “Reaching All For Christian Education”. The “Miriam Miller Missionary Society” rendered special music.

In 1972, the men’s group reorganized. Harold Knight, President of the North Carolina Lutheran Men, was guest speaker. The men enjoyed dinner, project planning and fellowship. On March 1, J.V. Schuler became a member of Grace and joined the Lutheran Men’s group. Members of the Lutheran Men were:

Ton Lineberger—President	Amos Best—Vice-President
Ralph Harmon-Secretary	Lonnie Burleson
J.V. Schuler	Gene Froneberger
Al Froneberger	Clyde Kiser
Reggie O’Brien	Peter Beck
Pastor Swygert	

On January 7, 1973 the “Lutheran Men” held a meeting. Judge Steve Dolly was guest speaker. He presented a program on different types of “wills”, and the many reasons for obtaining one sooner, rather than later. At another meeting Pastor Swygert invited Joe Butler, of Sisk Funeral Home, to present a program on “What You Need To Know About Funerals”. After the presentation, the “Lutheran Men” toured the Funeral Home. At the September meeting, Reggie O’Brien secured Glenn Adams, C.P.A., to speak on “Financial Planning”, which was very informative.

— *The Men of the Church* —

At a meeting in February of 1976, the men's group sponsored a "Ladies' Night" oyster stew dinner at "66" restaurant. In 1977, the "Lutheran Men" held eight total meetings during the year. They purchased and installed two security lights at the rear of the church building, and maintained the property grounds. Ten meetings were held in 1979, with four guest speakers presenting programs. Tom Lineberger was President, Amos Best was Vice President, and Ralph Harmon, Secretary and Treasurer.

On July 14, 1985, the men met at Gallagher Trails Golf Club in High Shoals. A breakfast was held at 7:30 followed by the meeting and fellowship. On September 15, a cookout was held at the Educational Building at 4:00 p.m. The men enjoyed a nice afternoon breeze and good food after their meeting. On November 12, the "Lutheran Men" held another oyster stew, this time at the Educational Building, at 7:00. All members of the congregation were invited. A musical presentation was presented by "The Trinity Singers" of Holy Trinity Lutheran church of Gastonia.

On February 14, 1987, the "Lutheran Men" took their Valentines to the "Lob-Steer Inn" for a special dinner. The March meeting was held at the Church. After the meeting, the men helped assemble the newly purchased playground equipment. In April, the "Lutheran Men" held a spring retreat for men and wives at "Lutheridge". This was held the weekend of the 8th through the 10th. The August meeting was held at the Educational Building. The men enjoyed a shrimp dinner. David Hook, C.P.A., spoke to the men about taxes.

On February 24 and 25, 1989, Al Froneberger led the men in a project to paint the Educational Building and clean the grounds around the Church. The men also repaired damage to the roof on the Educational Building.

In May of 1992, Pastor Fred Mitschke invited Reed Goodman of the North Carolina Forestry Service to come and speak to the "Lutheran Men" of Grace. The topic of his program was "Woodland-Urban Interfacing Fire". In June of 1996, a cookout was sponsored by the "Lutheran Men" after the morning worship service. The congregation enjoyed good food and fellowship.

Many men of Grace Lutheran Church have served their country as members of the military. Some have served during peaceful times, some during war. The following members served during World War II:

James William Absher*	Flay Ulysses Anthony
Zenas Beam	Lester Roosevelt Beam
Henry Alfred Best	Madison Roy Dameron
Carlos Lee Dameron	William Luther Dameron
Eugene Alexander Froneberger	Ernest Ross Froneberger
Glenn Augustus Kiser	Robert Vance Mauney
William Morris	William White Morris
Robert Henry Pearson	Rufus Sloan Plonk, Jr
Boyd Franklin Rayfield	Ned Luther Rhyne
Norman Patrick Rhyne*	Roy Lewis Robinson
Mary Louise Robinson	Marvin Boyce Robinson
Wilbur Hartwell Willis*	Ernest L. Best
Clyde Alvin Lutz	John Dietz Rhyne

* Killed in action.

Many other young men of Grace have also served in the military. Some of these include Larry Barringer, son of Pastor & Mrs. Barringer. Larry entered the Naval Academy as a "Midshipman" on July 8, 1956. In 1962, Reggie O'Brien entered Army basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. While at Fort Jackson, he was a member of the Drum and Bugle Corps. In 1964, Yates Harmon (Air Force) and Tommy Dameron (Air Force) were welcomed home from service during the Vietnam Era. Yates had been stationed in Texas, Tommy in Japan.

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In 1967, Grace had four young men to enter the military. Larry Harmon reported to the Air Force August 2nd. Frank Dameron entered the Air Force two weeks later. J.L. Smith, Jr, left in August for Vietnam to continue his work with the Red Cross as “Field Service Director”. Flay Anthony, Jr, reported for the Navy on September 4, 1967. In 1969 Jack Rhyne left for Air Force basic training in Texas. He was stationed in Camden, SC and Luke Air Force Base, AZ in the Air Force Band.

Currently, we have three church members affiliated with the Armed forces. Scott Harlow joined the Army in June 1998. He is currently on his second tour of duty. Brian Harlow joined the Marines in June of 2000. Brian served in the War with Iraq. Mike Harlow, Scott and Brian’s father, served as a Marine for 12 years. Daniel Beck enlisted into the NC Army National Guard in 2000, where he entered Basic training at Fort Benning, GA. He will serve until 2006.

Many men of our church deserve to be mentioned for their accomplishments, however, information needed to honor them was limited, or not available. Mr. Luther Dameron has been a devoted member of distinction. Luther, who is 93 years old, is our eldest male member. He along with his two brothers, Carlos and Madison, grew up in the church. Luther has served as Sunday School Superintendent, teacher and treasurer, has served on the church Council, worked as church custodian and has made our Communion wine since the early 1960’s. Luther still makes the Scuppernong (muscadine) wine by hand. He got the recipe from Ruth Beam, who “filled in” making the wine for a short period after the Kiser sisters, Alna and Elva, stopped in the early 1960’s. Prior to the Kiser sisters, Annie and Ferrie Lineberger (also sisters) made the wine. Lonnie Burluson also has made wine on occasion for the congregation. Carlos Dameron has served on the “Council”, the “Call Committee” and as an Usher. Carlos is still one of our most faithful members. Madison Dameron was a member of the Choir for many years. He served as Sunday School Superintendent and teacher, served on the “Alter Guild.”

Beginning in the early years of Grace’s existence, many men have taken on the additional responsibility of serving as church Treasurer. As recorded in the “Financial Books” in 1928, Mr. L.G. Rhyne was listed as Treasurer. He is the earliest documented official to serve in this capacity. On April 6, 1930, Mr. A.B. Kiser became Treasurer. He faithfully served in this position for more than 23 years! Mr. Kiser is the first member of the church to record church notes on history. Dr. Clyde Kiser, son of A.B. Kiser, was also Church Treasurer for many years. Mr. A.B. Kiser turned the books over to Alfred Best on January 1, 1953. Alfred agreed to accept this task, holding this office for ten years. Alfred was a member of the Church Council when the present church was planned and built, and also when the Educational Building and parsonage was built. He served on the Council off and on for 30 years. Alfred is still a faithful and important member of Grace. He and wife, Ruth, had one son, Alfred, Jr. Alfred told Pastor Frazier a funny story during one of his visits in the Spring of 2003. When Alfred, Jr. was four years old, he would sit with Alfred, Sr. near the back of the church. Two young men sitting behind them would always flip Al, Jr’s. ears, which made him fussy. Alfred didn’t want his son to cry or misbehave, so he took his son to the front pew. Little Alfred, seeing the young men in the back, and knowing his ears were safe, began to make funny faces at them! (Much to the delight of the congregation!).

Alfred’s brothers, Ernest and Amos, also were longtime members. Ernest and Rachel Best had two daughters, Judy and Rachel. Amos Best and wife, Walline, had three children: Ben, Wallie and Amy. All three grew up in the church and were active as youth. Ben married Diane Cheek. Ben served on the Church Council, as Usher and on many committees. Ben also provided the live “Chrismon” tree for many years. They have two daughters: Mary Beth and Amy. Both girls were also active as youth.

Ralph Harmon was another longtime, faithful church member. Ralph served on the Church Council, was Sunday School Superintendent and teacher and served in the choir for over forty years! Ralph was well known in the community for his woodworking abilities. Ralph never said no when asked to help with any church project. He has done repair work and built many items for the church. Some of these include bookshelves, choir robe cabinets, book racks (on the back of the pews) and the display case that is located in the Narthex. He and wife, Beth, will be fondly remembered for hosting many cookouts at their home. Ralph will always be remembered for his solos in the choir and for his warm smile.

Ralph Eric Harmon, grandson of Ralph Harmon and Ernest Best, has been a devoted member of our church. He was active as a youth, has served on the “Call Committee”, the Church Council, as an Usher and as cook for family cookouts. Eric and wife, Paige, currently serve as “Youth Group” Leaders. Each year, he helps build the Nativity stable and participates in the “Live Nativity Scene.” Eric, like his Grandfather Ralph, has made many repairs in the church and enjoys working on the church grounds.

Lonnie Burleson and his family joined Grace in 1950 during Pastor Rimmer’s tenure. Lonnie has been a leader in our congregation in many ways. He has served many terms on the Church Council (many years as President). He has served as a delegate at the Synod Convention, served as District President of the “Lutheran Men” group. He and son, Ronald, have worked on many projects and repairs for the church. Some of these include: installed a new floor and refinished Cabinets in the kitchen of the Educational Building, installed ceiling fans and refinished the hardwood flooring in the Educational Building and installed two new front doors leading into the church Sanctuary. Lonnie has also served as church liaison to “Lutheran Brotherhood” Branch #8600 for many years.

“Lutheran Brotherhood” is a member-owned fraternal benefit society that offers a broad range of financial products and services to Lutherans, nationwide. Through its charitable and benevolent programs, the Society aids its members, their communities and Lutheranism. They have matched funds each year for Grace that we use toward different projects. These “matching funds” have been used over the years to purchase needed items for the church. Carpet, lexan for the stained glass windows and tables, are but a few of the items that have been obtained. We have also used the “funds” to plant flowers and trees to beautify the community, to purchase food for the “Crises Assistance Ministry of Bessemer City”, to contribute to our schools and to help families in need. “Lutheran Brotherhood” and “Aid Association for Lutherans” merged in 2002 to become “Thrivent Financial”.

William “Bill” Morris is another longtime member who grew up in the church. His sister, Betty Jo Morris and Peggy Pearson remembered this story about their brothers:

Bill Morris and Bob Pearson were just youngsters when they attended the little white, framed church on the corner of Washington Ave. and 11th Street.

The two boys would sneak outside to play during choir practice. They would “rough-house” outside the window, disturbing the choir. Then, they would jump over the hedges in the church yard and run off to Pate Lutz’ store to spend their offering money on candy. Mrs. McClanahan caught the boys and sat them on the front row so she could keep an eye on them because of the boy’s loud and boisterous behavior. Bill and Bob didn’t like this one bit!

Bill has served on the Church Council, served as an Usher, as Lector and taught the adult Sunday School class for 17 years! Bill and Pat Morris’ daughter is married to Scott Ledbetter. Scott has served on the Church Council, is a member of the choir, has served as Sunday School teacher and currently serves on the “Call Committee”. He is involved with youth activities and helps with church projects, repairs and maintenance. Our church depends on Scott when we need a hand on electrical work.

J.V. Schuler became a member of Grace in March of 1970 after his Mother, Alvenia Schuler, expressed to him how much she thought of Pastor David Swygert. He was invited to join the choir by Eva Carpenter. He has been an active choir member for 33 years! J.V. has been Sunday School Superintendent and teacher of the Adult class. He has served on the Church Council, served as Secretary to the Council for 11 years, served on the Alter Guild since 1976, served as Chairman of the “Worship and Music Committee”, has acted as delegate from Grace to the NC Synod convention many times, acted as “Service Officer” for “Lutheran Brotherhood and currently serves on the “Call Committee”. J.V. was installed and blessed by Pastor Mitschke to serve as a “Liturgical Deacon” to help administer communion. He has served in this capacity for four years.

On one Communion Sunday, the person responsible for the “Altar Guild” filled the chalice and the communion cups full to the brim. Pastor Fred Mitschke could only drink white, dry wine. Red, sweet wine made him sick. During the service, Pastor Mitschke started to drink from the chalice. He smelled the red, sweet wine, and it made him sick. He whispered to J.V., “you’ll have to drink all of this “blessed” wine in the chalice

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(Once it has been blessed, it can not be thrown away). J.V. told the Pastor that he couldn't, because he had to drive home! Pastor Mitschke told him that if he gets pulled over by the police, have them to call him and he would explain! So, J.V. drank all of the wine. After church, Pastor Mitschke told J.V. that he had to go to Lenoir Rhyne College, so, J.V. was on his own! J.V. began his trip home, even though he felt "light-headed". He was scared that the police was going to pull him over because he was weaving from side to side and swerving around the corners! J.V. has also led the morning worship service when Pastors have been absent or on vacation! As you can see, J.V. has been a valued member and involved in many aspects of the church.

Eugene Froneberger was a longtime member of Grace. Gene served on many committees and unselfishly gave his time and talents to our church. He served on the "Church Council", belonged to the "Lutheran Men's Group" and many other aspects of church life. Gene will always be remembered for his smile, laugh and his love of the church. His son, Al Froneberger, was also a very active member of Grace. Al served on countless committees and led many projects. Al served as President of the Church Council, as Usher, as Lector and led the morning worship service when the Pastor was absent. Al was a key person in our congregation, who did a lot of maintenance around the church property.

Tom Lineberger has been very active in our church. He has served on the Church Council, various committees, sung in the choir for many years, served as Youth leader, as President of the "Lutheran Men" and led the morning worship service when the Pastor was absent. Tom and wife, Bobbie, have entertained the congregation several times at their home over the years. Their oldest son, Tommy, is the first member of Grace to become a Lutheran Minister. Tommy and wife Debbie reside in the Columbia, SC area, where he is Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in West Columbia, SC. Debbie is employed at Lineberger Memorial Library, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as Circulation Manager/Systems Coordinator. They have four children, Shawn, Jennifer, Megan and Katie.



**Pastor
Tommy Lineberger**

Reggie O'Brien grew up in the church. He was baptized by Pastor McClanahan. Reggie has served on the Church Council, the "Finance Committee", as a Sunday School teacher and as an Usher. He has served as Vice President of the "Lutheran Men", has stored the "Nativity Scene" supplies in his barn and helps with the construction each year. Reggie is currently a member of the "Centennial Committee". Reggie and wife, Joyce, have two sons, Kevin and Michael.

Kevin O'Brien was baptized by Pastor Eddie Ricks. He was very active and involved in the "Youth Group". Kevin attended Lutheridge camp at age 7 for one week. He has played the trumpet and guitar during the Worship Service, served as Usher, performed many repairs to the church property and helps build the "Nativity Scene" each year.

Michael O'Brien was baptized by Pastor George Shuford. He was very involved in the "Youth Group" and children's choir growing up. Mike has served on the Church Council several terms, served on the Call Committee, serves as Usher, Lector, serves on the "Alter Guild", the Fellowship Committee, the Property Committee and is presently serving as President of the Church Council and is on the "Centennial Committee". Mike also had a decorative, Centennial plate commissioned for our 100th Celebration.

Peter Beck has served on the Church Council several terms. He has served as Treasurer of the Council, served on the Property Committee, the Youth Committee and serves as an Usher. Pete has been a very dependable church member who can always be counted upon. Pete's son, Daniel Beck, was a member of the Youth Choir, Handbell Choir and an instrumentalist while growing up in Grace. Today, Daniel serves on the Church Council, serves as a Lector, an Usher, Communion assistant and serves on the Property Committee.

Bob Wells has taken an active part in our church. He has served on the Church Council, Property Committee, as an Usher and has headed many projects for Grace (new thermostats, planting flowers, painting handrails, etc.).

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Ron Potter has served several terms on the Church Council, has served as an Usher, has taught Sunday School, has been involved with the “Lutheran men” and has been active in many other projects through the years.

Paul Hager is a longtime member who has served on the Church Council, served as an Usher and has attended and contributed in many other activities. His son, Ricky Hager, grew up in the church with his brother, Rusty. Ricky has been involved in many areas of the church. He is very active and energetic when it comes to work that needs to be done for our church. He has served on the “Council”, serves as Lector, Usher and is a current member of the “Call Committee”, Property Committee and Fellowship Committee. Ricky, with wife Robin, enjoys helping with youth activities.

Todd Parker has served on the Church Council and has helped with many projects around the church. He helped in the purchase and installation of new thermostats in the Educational Building and church Sanctuary. Todd and wife, Cathy, have one son, Brandon.

Clyde Lutz has served on the Church Council, as an Usher, and was a member of the “Lutheran Men” group. Clyde has taken part in many activities and projects and served Grace for many years! Clyde and Frances’ son, Alvin, grew up in our church and was a member for many years. Alvin and wife, Susan (former Secretary of Grace) has one son, Andy. Andy also attended Grace as a youth.

Tony Best has served on the Church Council, as an Usher and has been involved in the maintenance of the church grounds. Tony is married to our Secretary, Terrie Best.

Michael Harlow has been involved in many activities at Grace. He has served as Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop #517. This troop was formed and sponsored by Grace. He has also served on the Church Council, as an Usher and is in charge of yard maintenance. Mike is always eager to help with any project. Mike and Elizabeth Harlow have three sons: Scott, who is a member of the Army, Brian, who is a Marine, and Mickey.

Charles Groves has served as Chairman of the “Fellowship Committee”. He has worked hard preparing our church dinners and socials. Charles has entertained the congregation at his lake home with Halloween and Christmas cookouts. He has served on the Church Council, sung with the choir for special services, serves on the “Centennial Committee” and is currently the Chairman of the “Call Committee”. Charles is a dedicated member who can be depended on.

Stanley Sims is a man who cares deeply about his church. When the church is in need, Stanley will see that the need is taken care of, even if he has to do it by himself! Stanley has served his church as a Councilman, has helped organize many projects, has organized many “Family Night Dinners” and, along with his wife, Edith, and Mother-in-law, Lucy, Stanley is known as our unofficial “Master Chef”! Along with handling the cooking choirs, the Sims entertain at our socials with jokes and funny stories. They always end the night’s program with a spiritual message and prayer.

Mike Flanigan is another member who really supports his church. He has spearheaded many projects and followed them through to completion (carpet fund, refinishing hardwood floors, Lexan project). Mike has made sure many needed repairs and maintenance to the church buildings are completed. He currently serves on the Church Council, serves as Lector, Usher, and as Communion Assistant. He has previously served as “Support Committee” Chairman and has represented our church at the NC Synod convention.

In getting ready for Grace’s 97th Homecoming, Mike drove his big Massey-Ferguson tractor up Costner School Road, down Maine Avenue then turned and rode four blocks to Grace Lutheran Church to pull up some unsightly bushes. A long line of cars fell in behind the big, slow tractor. The drivers in the cars would not have been so irate if they only knew that Mike was on his way to work at a church! Once there, Scott Ledbetter, Ricky Hager and Eric Harmon put chains around a thick mass of bushes. Mike, on his tractor, pulled them from the ground with ease. Susan Wittman helped direct Mike and the others in cleaning up all the bushes, trees and trash. She then had the men carry a slab of concrete from the back of the Educational Building to the side and place under the trashcans. The men’s backs hurt for weeks!

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Last but not least, we would like to recognize another man of the church: Pastor Cyrus Frazier. Cy came to us as a part time, interim Pastor, but has become a very important part of our church family. Cy has held our church together and led us through some difficult times. He was called to be our interim Pastor, then returned on a moment's notice to lead us again. With his warm demeanor, his positive outlook and love of Christ, Pastor Frazier has helped our church to move forward and plan for our future!

Individually, or as an organized group, the men of the church have always made sure that Grace's needs were met. The aforementioned men are just some of the many members who have given their hearts and minds to make this possible. We thank each and every one of them for their love and contributions.

The Women of Grace

The role of women in Grace Lutheran Church has changed through the years. The difference between the positions and roles of women now and that of yesterday is dramatically clear when you read the lists of elected officers (who were all male) when our church was formed in 1903.

Today, women serve on the Church Council, various standing committees, hold elected offices, serve as Pastors and have an active role in the overall decision-making process of church business.

The earliest recorded minutes of an organized womens group, formed in 1932, was written by Mrs. Zoe Plonk, who was the group's secretary. This group called themselves "The Women's Missionary Society". Their main emphasis was to study and support the work of home and foreign missions.

"The Women's Missionary Society" meetings were held in different members' homes, where they opened their meetings with a hymn and a prayer. The roll was called, then a meager offering was taken (their economic situation was depressed; only five or ten cents would be collected per member). A member would usually present a program, and then business would be covered. The "Society" would discuss projects like making boxes that contained useful household items that were sent to the missionaries. After the meeting was adjourned, the ladies would socialize and enjoy refreshments.

In 1932, members included:

Mrs. Lena Carpenter	Miss Eva Carpenter
Mrs. E.L. Froneberger	Mrs. D.P. Froneberger
Mrs. A.B. Kiser	Mrs. E.E. Beam
Mrs. Will Ormand	Mrs. Bill (Anita) Morris
Mrs. H.C. Froneberger	Miss Blanche Hovis
Mrs. M.C. Mauney	Mrs. L. G. Rhyne
Mrs. Zoe Plonk (Sec.)	Mrs. Mary Alice Horsley (President)

Mrs. Zoe Plonk served as Secretary of the "Women's Missionary Society" for many years. Thanks to her notes and astute record keeping, collecting information for this book was made easier. These devoted ladies took part in many projects. They helped many families in-need, made robes for the Youth choir, assumed responsibility for the care and up-keep of the Pastor's and Adult Choir robes. They also helped with the painting of the church and the cleaning of the inside of the church each week, purchased alter paraments and started an organ fund. The list goes on and on!

In 1933, Mrs. Anita Morris and Miss Eva Carpenter were in charge of a rummage sale to help raise funds for their many projects. Pastor Yount received \$10.00 from the "Society" as a Christmas gift. Mrs. E.E. Beam was in charge of a chicken supper.

The "Society" also funded their many projects by having bake sales. At one social, the women held a "Silver" tea party. After tea and delicious pick-ups were prepared and then served to the invited church and

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community members, a hat was passed around for “silver” donations. Dinners were also held to raise money for the youth activities. Other social/fund raising activities included auctions, raffles, lunch box sales, yard sales and craft shows where they sold hand-made goods. The “Society” routinely visited the shut-ins at their homes and nursing homes.

In 1938, the “Women’s Missionary Society” had an even larger membership. They still met in different member’s homes. Mrs. McClanahan was President; Mrs. Zoe Plonk remained the secretary. Other members included Mrs. J.S. (Venie) Carpenter, Mrs. F.B. (Frances) Lutz, Mrs. J.J. Robinson, Mrs. W.C. Hovis and Mrs. M.L. Ormand.

In 1939, the “Women’s Missionary Society” held a program about a missionary, Mrs. P.O. Machetzki, who served in India. Mrs. McClanahan was hostess. Lace and other items from India were displayed. After the presentation, delegates to the Southern Conference were elected, with Mrs. L.L. Rhyne and Mrs. Zoe Plonk representing Grace.

On September 2, 1945, a mission study program was held during the morning service. Mrs. P.O. Machetzki, now a missionary in South America was the guest speaker. 118 people were in attendance, including congregation members as well as community members and other pastors. An offering of \$36.00 was collected, which Mrs. Machetzki used as a memorial in memory of her husband to be given to a church being built in British Guiana. Also during this program a special service was held for our young men in service. The families of all our servicemen were present and answered the roll call. Thanks and prayers were given for “Bringing to a close the dreadful, cruel war” (WWII).

A second group of younger women, formed earlier in the year, called themselves the “Miriam Miller Missionary Society”. They rendered special music for this service. Members included:

Eva Carpenter	Lena Carpenter
Alma Pearson	Alna Kiser
Elva Kiser	Anita Morris
Sara Froneberger	Alma Coon
Mary Keeter	

On September 1, 1950, the “Women’s Missionary Society” raised \$125.00 and donated it towards the Carpet Fund for the new church building. In 1952, the two women’s groups (the “Women’s Missionary Society” and the “Miriam Miller Missionary Society”) joined together to sponsor a tea social in honor of the new Pastor, Rev. and Mrs. H.P. Barringer.

In 1954, Grace Lutheran Church had **three** women’s “circles”: The “Women’s Missionary Society”, the “Miriam Miller Missionary Society” and the “H.P. Barringer Circle”. Later that year, six new ladies joined the “Women’s Missionary Society. They included:

Miss Ferrie Lineberger	Miss Annie Lineberger
Mrs. Beulah Gamble	Mrs. A.S. Grier
Mrs. Rachel Best	Mrs. Dave Coon

Special Guests were Mrs. Madison Dameron and Mrs. Barringer.

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In June of 1955, all Circles took part in a picnic covered dish supper that was enjoyed at Lewis Lake, located on Lewis Farm Road. The July meeting was held at Mrs. Zoe Plonk's home. The group looked through an old "minutes" book of the "Society's" beginning in 1932. Mrs. Zoe Plonk remarked, "Boy, how our members have changed!" The September meeting was a joint meeting between the "Miriam Miller Society" and the "H.P. Barringer Circle". Mrs. Dave Coon led the program. Mrs. Zoe Plonk presided over the meeting that followed. Everyone was urged to attend a mission study course that was to be held in Charlotte.

In June 1956, the "Women's Missionary Society" meeting was held at the home of Mrs. William (Beulah) Gamble. She served a delicious coconut cake and coffee during the social hour. At the July meeting, a covered dish supper at the church was enjoyed by all three circles. Miss Alna Kiser, President of the women of the church, presided over the meeting. A delegate (Mrs. Hagar) and an alternate (Mrs. Flay Anthony) were elected to attend the state convention to be held at Lenoir Rhyne College.

At the December meeting, all three women's circles decided to have a reception for the newly called Pastor, Rev. George Robertson and family. The reception was to be held January 6, 1957. During the March 1957 meeting of the "Women's Missionary Society", Mrs. Zerma Robertson was hostess and program leader. The ladies decided to rename their "Society" the "Jessie Froneberger Circle" in honor of charter member, Mrs. E.L. (Jessie) Froneberger. This group was deeply involved in helping support a home for orphans and with the Lowman Home for the aged. They were concerned with the needs of the church and the needs of the community.

On July 5, 1959, Mrs. R.S. Plonk, Sr. was named to be Committee Supervisor over the construction of the Educational Building.

In 1962 the ladies of Grace had three "Circles". The "Jessie Froneberger Circle", the "H.P. Barringer Circle", and the "Delia McClanahan Circle" (formally known as the "Miriam Miller Society"). As you can see, the ladies' now referred to their groups as "Circles" rather than "Societies". On July 12, 1962, the "H.P. Barringer Circle" met at Lewis Lake for a picnic.

In 1964, the women's "Circles" consisted of the following Members:

The "Delia McClanahan Circle"

Alna Kiser—President	Elva Kiser—Recorder
Edna Barringer	Eva Carpenter
Lena Carpenter	Alma Coon
Mary Dobbins	Anita Morris
Alma Pearson	Bertha Ritchie
Margie O'Brien	

The "Jessie Froneberger Circle"

Mrs. F.B. Lutz—President	Mrs. R.S. Plonk—Recorder
Mrs. William Gamble	Mrs. John (Mamie Bright) Dameron
Mrs. Jack Costner	Mrs. R.L. Lewis
Miss Annie Lineberger	Miss Ferrie Lineberger
Mrs. M.C. Mauney	Mrs. L.G. Rhyne
Mrs. A.B. Kiser	

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The “H.P. Barringer Circle”

Bera Dameron—Pres.	Beth Harmon—Recorder
Gladys Anthony	Ruth Beam
Ruth Best	Rachel Best
Walline Best	Dot Costner
Margie Dameron	Betty Deal
Dot Jenkins	Betty Leonhardt
Lib Trammel	Frances Lutz
Gladys McNair	Mary Alice Rhyne
Betty Pasour	Lela Ware
Ruby Philbeck	Mrs. J.L. Smith

The L.C.W. (Lutheran Church Women) is an organization that is sponsored by the Synod to promote women’s activities, involvement and motivation. Through its activities and fellowship, women strengthen their relationships with Christ and each other. The L.C.W. provides new information and resources to the women to bring back to their home churches and apply them in the community. The three “Circles” at Grace combined to form The Grace chapter of the L.C.W. A delegate and alternate were elected each year to represent Grace at the Southwest District meetings, and then the N.C. Convention.

In 1965, the Southwest District L.C.W. met April 24th at Lutheridge. Alma Pearson, President, led a group of women from Grace who chartered a bus. Forty-one women from the area met in Dallas for the trip. Women from Grace included: Mrs. Plonk, Mrs. Lutz, Annie Lineberger, Ferrie Lineberger, Gladys Anthony, Ruth Best and Beth Harmon.

During the December 1967 L.C.W. meeting, Miss Alna Kiser led a program about Japan. The women had been learning about the Lutheran Missionaries in the Far East. The group of women made adult and infant kimonos, and also made robes to be sent to Liberia, Africa. During this time period, the “Jessie Froneberger Circle” dissolved. Membership had begun to decline so the remaining members merged into the “Barringer and McClanhan Circles”.

In 1970, Grace welcomed Rev. David Swygert as our new Pastor. His wife, Marilyn, became the Chairman of the committee to create “Chrismon” ornaments for our first tree. All of the women in the church helped with this project. The “Chrismons” were completed on December 13th, just in time to put the tree up. The ornaments were dedicated and blessed during the morning worship service by Pastor Swygert. An illustrated booklet, explaining the meanings of each ornament, was given to each member of the congregation as they entered the Sanctuary.

In 1974, Marilyn Swygert introduced a weekday church school to Grace. Marilyn served as the Director, with Wanda Anthony helping as teacher. This marked the first time our church held Youth classes during the school week. Marilyn always came up with new ideas for our church. Her enthusiasm was much appreciated and very contagious!

In 1978, the L.C.W. of Grace met each quarter. Led by Gladys McNair, President, three members attended the Southwestern unit meeting at Lenoir Rhyne College. They enjoyed Bible study, workshops, fellowship and good food. Many useful ideas were then brought back to Grace!



Members Honored - 1975

Seated - Mamie S. Dameron and Ferrie Hager

Standing - Mary Dobbins, Mrs. William Anita Morris, Alna Kiser, Alma Pearson, Mrs. Zoe Plonk

Back - Clyde Kiser, Pastor Swygert, Eva Carpenter

In 1979, a new women's "circle" was formed. Through the efforts of Paneen Froneberger, the "Ricks Circle" (named for former Pastor Edwin Ricks) was started for the younger ladies of the church. They started a visitation program that made sure that our church's sick and shut-in members were made to feel connected to the church. Again, three women's "Circles" were present at Grace.

Members of the "Ricks Circle" included:

Paneen Froneberger
Wanda Anthony

Beth Leonhardt
Susan Lutz

In 1981, Susan Lutz was hired to be our first Secretary. She worked part time. Up to this point, volunteers, such as Wanda Anthony, the Youth Group and others donated their time to type the bulletin, newsletter, etc. Volunteers, such as Luther Dameron, handled the Treasurer duties.

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Lena Carpenter, organist, and Paneen Froneberger, adult and youth choir director, were honored with a dinner on August 8, 1982. This social was presented to show our church's appreciation and gratitude for all their hard work.

In 1983, the "Ricks Circle" sponsored a float in the Bessemer City Christmas parade. The theme of the float was "The Nativity". Congregation members portrayed Mary, Joseph, shepherds, the wisemen and an angel. Gladys McNair made new costumes for the nativity scene. Also this year, the "Barringer Circle" donated \$200.00 to purchase playground equipment. A swing set was installed on the South side lot beside the Educational Building.

In 1984, Gladys McNair was President of the "Barringer Circle", Billie Thompson was President of the "McClanhan Circle" and Wanda Anthony was President of the "Ricks Circle".

On November 4, 1986 the "McClanahan Circle" met at the home of Margie O'Brien. Joyce O'Brien, of the "Barringer Circle", presented a program entitled "Angels of the Bible". This presentation detailed the war of the angels in Heaven, in which The Archangel, Michael, led the defeat of Lucifer and his followers, who were then cast out of Heaven by God. This program was also presented to the "Barringer Circle", as well as the "Youth Group".

In 1988, Bera Dameron reorganized the "Barringer Circle". Membership had begun to decline. Bera spurred new interest and set the women onto a new path. In 1989, the "Barringer Circle" donated funds from Memorials to be used to build a handicap ramp. Members of the "Circle" were as follows:

Gladys Anthony	Gladys McNair
Bernell Burleson	Verdie Mullinax
Frieda Lewis	Pat Morris
Dot Jenkins	Carolyn Huggins

In 1989, due to declining membership, the remaining members of the "McClanahan Circle" decided to merge into the "Barringer Circle".

Through the years, the women's "Circles" have shouldered the responsibility of organizing and preparing meals for the sick and bereaved congregation members and families. The women have also been the primary source for news and communication between members during the week. The "Circles" have always made sure that baby showers and wedding showers were arranged. If someone was ever in need...the Women of Grace have been there to provide the necessary help and support!

On June 13, 1993, the "Barringer Circle" donated funds to help pay for the construction of a storage building to be connected to the Educational Building. Lib Trammell led this project. She actually helped mix the mortar to lay the bricks!

In 1996, the "Ricks Circle" sponsored a cookbook to help raise funds for the youth of Grace. Margaret McSwain was in charge of this project. Terrie Best suggested the name, "Just Add Grace", as the title of the book. Members of the congregation, their families and friends, provided the recipes.

In 1997 the "Barringer Circle" was going strong. Mary Alice Rhyne was President. Susan Wittman, who recently had joined the church, became a member of the "Circle". That year, the women bought a light-weight

vacuum cleaner and donated it to the church, painted the nursery, bought a throw-rug for the nursery and mailed many cards and letters to sick and shut-in members. Dot Jenkins bought flowers and potting soil and planted flowers around the church bulletin board.

In 1998, new member Edith Sims became President of the “Barringer Circle”. Lucy Smith and Anna Duell also joined the group. Many projects were completed during the year: 25 padded chairs were purchased for the Educational Building, \$75 worth of silk flowers were donated for altar use, new letters for the bulletin boards were purchased, repairs to the restrooms were made and a dinner for fourteen members of Gladys McNair’s family was prepared after her hospital stay.

The congregation was invited by Edith and Stanley Sims, and Lucy Smith to an “open house” on December 6. Twenty-three Christmas trees were decorated, and refreshments were served. Also in December, Ruth Beam was honored for all of her calling and “keeping in touch” with the congregation members throughout the year. Ruth was the official “caller” who kept everyone informed on church business and was responsible for signing up members for the alter flowers list each Sunday. Although homebound, Ruth still managed to faithfully dedicate her time and contributions to our church.

The “Barringer Circle” raised \$250.00 to be used toward buying two new front doors for the church. Mary Alice Rhyne and Margie Dameron took flowers to Freida Lewis who had surgery, to Shirley Hager who had knee surgery and a fruit basket to Bernell Burleson.

In April of 1999, the “Barringer Circle” was renamed the “Bera Dameron Circle”. This change reflected the honor and love felt for Mrs. Bera Dameron, a longtime member of Grace. “The Bera Dameron Memorial Garden” was planned and designed by the “Circle” to be located at the front of the church. Azaleas, Barberry shrubs, evergreen shrubs and beautiful flowers were planted in September of 2000. The women of the “Circle”, along with men of the church completed this project in one day. Mike Flanigan brought his tractor to pull up the old shrubbery, and Todd Parker provided his tiller. A statue of St. Francis of Assisi and a plaque to record and honor deceased members of the “Dameron Circle” was placed in the garden. Said Joyce O’Brien, “Bera always had a smile and a kind word for everyone she greeted; She always remembered church members’ birthdays with a card.”

Members of the “Dameron Circle” in 2000 were:

Edith Sims—President	Catherine Ross—Vice President
Becky Wells—Sec.	Billie Thompson—Corresponding Sec.
Beth Harmon—Treasurer	Susan Wittman
Dot Jenkins	Mary Alice Rhyne
Margie Dameron	Frances Lutz
Gladys McNair	Lucy Smith
Bernell Burleson	Ruth Beam
Abbie Shumate	Shirley Hager
Frieda Lewis	Beulah Dameron

The “Dameron Circle” made plans for the Southwest District Synod Convention and for the W.E.L.C.A. Convention (Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), formally known as the L.C.W. (Lutheran Church Women). During the year 2000, the women prepared meals and sent flowers to the sick and to the

— *The Women of Grace* —

families of those who passed away. In 2000-2003, food was collected and donated to the “Crises Assistance Ministry” of Bessemer City, collected money for “Gifts of Joy” (an arm of Lutheran Family Services) and hygiene kits were collected and sent to “Lutheran World Relief”.



Bera Dameron Circle - March 2003

1st Row L to R - Dot Jenkins, Gladys McNair, Lucy Smith Frances Lutz, Mary Alice Rhyne

2nd Row L to R - Beth Harmon, Margie Dameron, Edith Sims, Catherine Ross

On June 2, 2002, the “Ricks Circle” was reorganized. Twelve active members participated during the year. Members are as follows:

Joyce O’Brien—President	Myra Ledbetter—Vice President
Robin Hager—Secretary	Elizabeth Harlow—Treasurer
Angie O’Brien	Marie Beck
Jane Kaiser	Heather Stevens
Terri Best	Jessica Best
Marion Neal	Lauren Ledbetter
Paige Harmon	Julie Cox
Traci Melton	

Each “Ricks Circle” meeting began with a prayer and devotion. Projects completed or in process include: cleaning the nursery and plans for remodeling; reformed the “Youth Group”; sponsored a yard and bake sale to raise funds for the Centennial book expenses (Angie O’Brien—Project Leader); repaired the “Crismon” ornaments; inventory was taken on the “Nativity Scene” costumes (new pieces were added); a banner was designed and made for the “Centennial Celebration” by Elizabeth Harlow; unused, wooden chairs from the Educational Building attic were repainted with designs to auction off during the “Centennial Dinner”; cards and Christmas care packages were sent to Brian and Scott Harlow who are in the Military. At the “Ricks Circle”

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Ricks Circle - July 2003

Back: Angie O'Brien, Marie Beck, Elizabeth Harlow

Front: Myra Ledbetter, Joyce O'Brien, Robin Hager

Christmas dinner held at the Gondola Restaurant, money was collected to help the "Youth group" sponsor two needy children with dinner, clothes and toys; Sponsored the "Nativity Scene" (Robin, Elizabeth and Joyce coordinators).

We have many descendants of the original charter members still in our church today. Mrs. Ruth Rhyne McCall, our eldest member (97 years old), said that Mr. John J. George baptized her sister Stella in 1895 in the home of charter member, Henry L. Rhyne. Mr. George was a local Lutheran townsman, who occasionally served as a lay pastor. The Rev. J.R. Peterson, who's Parish included Christ Lutheran Church (Stanley), Holy Communion (Dallas), Philadelphia Lutheran Church (Dallas), sometimes came to Bessemer City to preach or render pastoral services.

Mrs. Mary Dobbins said she was the first person to be baptized in the white, framed Lutheran Church building on Washington Ave. She was presumably baptized by Rev. C.I. Morgan in either 1904 or 1905, when she was a baby. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Froneberger, were charter members. Mary taught voice and piano at Tryon and Bessemer City schools. She had one son, D.J. Keeter.

Maude Rhyne and Ruth Rhyne McCall were sisters who grew up in Grace. Their parents were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rhyne. Maude Rhyne is Catherine Ross' mother. When Maude married, they left Grace and joined the A.R.P. Church in town, where Catherine grew up. Catherine married Robert Ross. When she and her family moved back to town, they joined Grace. She and Robert had three children: Marilyn, David and Phyllis. All three grew up in the church and were very active. Phyllis is still an active member today. Catherine Ross is currently President of the "Bera Dameron Circle" and is very active in church activities. Her grandparents, Henry Levi Rhyne and Sarah Francis Catherine Best Rhyne, were charter members of Grace.

— *The Women of Grace* —

Mary Alice Rhyne married Catherine Ross' first cousin, Ned Rhyne. He was the son of Miles Rhyne, who was Maude Rhyne's brother (Miles Rhyne was a double cousin to Alfred, Amos and Ernest Best!). Mary Alice has been a very active member of the "Dameron Circle", and other functions at Grace. She has been a Sunday school teacher, a council member, Chairperson of the Call Committee, Centennial committee and led many projects for the church. Mary Alice worked very hard in the "Bera Dameron Memorial Garden", planting flowers and shrubbery. She was the "Luther-League" (youth) leader with Margie Dameron for nine years. Together, they chaperoned the youth on many retreats. Mary Alice and Ned reared two children, Mary Anna and Jack.

Margie Dameron is another long time member of Grace. Married to Carlos Dameron, they brought up three children in the church: Tommy, Frank and Carlos Jr. She and Mary Alice have teamed-up on many activities over the years. She is very active in the "Dameron Circle", Sunday school, has served on the "Call Committee" and as Youth leader.

Bera Dameron was married to Madison Dameron, who was brother to Carlos and Luther Dameron. Bera and Madison, had two children, Becky (Wells) and Jane (Kaiser), who grew up in the church. Becky married Bob Wells at Grace on August 20, 1960. Becky said it was so hot, they left the doors open in hopes to feel a breeze! Becky has been very active in church activities, has served on the "Call Committee" and as Secretary in the "Dameron Circle". Jane Dameron Kaiser, who grew up in Grace, has been the "Youth Group" leader, Council member, "Ricks Circle" member and has served on many committees over the years. Jane has two sons, John and Robbie. Both grew up as active members of Grace.

Beulah Dameron, wife of Luther Dameron, is another longtime, faithful member of Grace. Beulah has been a contributing member of the women's circles for many years. She and Luther have one son, Bill.

Anita Morris, mother of Betty Jo and Bill Morris, was very active in the women's circles. Anita's father, Mr. Isaac White, was one of our charter members. Betty Jo Morris grew up a member of Grace. She has served on the Council several times, was a member of the choir for years, had taught Sunday school and is a member of the "Centennial Committee"! In 1989, Betty Jo hired Mike O'Brien, who was home from college during the summer, to trim her shrubbery. She instructed him to give her holly bush a "flat top" cut, like former UNC basketball player J.R. Reid's hair. Before she went into the house, she said, "Don't cut any fingers off!" 15 minutes later, her doorbell rang. Mike was at the door. "I cut my finger!" After Betty Jo stopped the bleeding, she warned Mike not to go back outside. It was 97 degrees, and he might pass out. Against her wishes, Mike proceeded back outside. The doorbell rang a second time; she opened the door... "Betty Jo, I'm passing out!" Betty Jo walked him back inside, sat him down and gave him some water. The "flat-topped" holly bush is gone, but Mike's scar remains!

Pat Morris, wife of Bill Morris, has been active in the women's circles, delivered "Meals-On Wheels", taught Sunday school and served on many committees. Pat and Bill have one daughter, Myra Morris Ledbetter. Myra, a lifelong member of Grace, is the great-granddaughter of charter member Isaac White. Myra was active in church as a youth. She participated in the "live nativity scene", taught Sunday school, currently serves on the church council, is Vice President of the "Ricks Circle", and Sunday school superintendent. She is married to Scott Ledbetter. They have three children: Lauren, Emily and Bryce.

Alma Pearson and brother, Gene Froneberger were the children of charter members, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Froneberger. Alma was very involved in the women's circles. She played the piano for the church before Grace used an organ in its worship service. She sang in the choir, delivered "Meals-on-Wheels" and was the first

— *The Women of Grace* —

women to serve on the church council. Alma's daughter, Peggy Pearson, is also a life-long member. Peggy has served in the choir and on the Alter Guild for many years. Her alto voice guides our congregation on each hymn. Peggy has served on the council, taught Sunday school, played piano for Sunday school, provided refreshments for the "Live Nativity Scene" each year and currently is a member of the "Call Committee". Peggy has three siblings who also grew-up in the church: Brad, Bob and Corinne.

Gene Froneberger and wife Pansy, had two children: Al and Peggy, who both were reared in the church. Pansy was a very faithful Lutheran who loved her church and it's congregation. Al's wife, Paneen a music teacher at Bessemer City Central School, was the music director at Grace for many years. Her hard work and dedication to the youth will always be appreciated. She and Al have two children: Marcie and John. Marcie is now Music Director at Christ The King Lutheran Church, in Charlotte, NC.

Mrs. Flay (Gladys) Anthony and her daughter Wanda, were two of the most devoted workers in Grace Lutheran Church for many years. Gladys served as a Girl Scout leader, Council member, women's circle officer, L.C.W. delegate and President and Sunday school teacher. She helped make the original "Chrismon" ornaments, she hand-made some of the banners that hang in the Sanctuary today and served as youth leader. One task that many will remember Gladys, Flay and Wanda for was preparing meals for our many family dinners and socials through the years. Gladys and Flay Anthony had two children: Flay Jr. and Wanda.

Wanda Anthony, a schoolteacher by profession, enjoyed spending time with children. She had the ability to motivate the children to take an active part in many aspects of the church life. As a Sunday school teacher and "Youth Group" leader, Wanda had a profound influence on the children. She taught leadership, responsibility and moral lessons, while making it fun for them. At one time, Wanda typed the church bulletin each week and supervised the youth in creating and typing the monthly newsletter. She served on the Council, as the Fellowship Committee and Finance Committee Chairperson and was active in the "Ricks Circle".

Carolyn (Priest) Huggins and her family were members of Grace from 1971-1991. Carolyn had four children: Gerald, Sissy, Steve and Sarah Priest. She helped cook with the "Meals-On-Wheels" program, was Editor of the newsletter, was the Director of "Weekday Church School", helped with the youth and also was a member of the choir. Carolyn served on the Church Council and was active in the "Barringer Circle". On May 1, 1982, Carolyn and Alan Huggins were married at Grace by Interim Pastor John Merck.

Frances Lutz, wife of Clyde Lutz, has been a member of our church for many years. She has been a devoted member of the "Dameron Circle" where she has been involved in many projects and helped prepare meals for the sick and bereaved. Frances also served as "Luther League" leader in the 60's, helping Mary Alice Rhyne and Margie Dameron. Frances and husband Clyde have two children: Cynthia and Alvin. Alvin's wife, Susan Lutz, was Grace's first paid Secretary in the early 80's. She was a member of the "Ricks Circle", and a member of the hand bell choir. Susan and Alvin have one child, Andy.

Gladys McNair has served on many projects and committees that are too numerous to recall. Gladys has been an inspiration to many church members. She has served on the Council, was a member of the choir for many years, served as Sunday School teacher and leader, past President of the "Barringer Circle" and served as delegate to the L.C.W. conventions many times. Gladys helped make the "Chrismons" and also has made costumes for the "Live Nativity Scene". Gladys is known for her many delicious cakes that she has made for our dinners and socials! Gladys and Jack McNair have three children, Jimmy, Jackie and Gary McNair, who grew up in the church.

— *The Women of Grace* —

Beth Harmon married Ralph Harmon, Gladys McNair's brother. Beth and Ralph had four children: Yates, Bobby, Larry and Marion. All four were active in the church while growing up. Beth is active in the "Dameron Circle" where she has held the office of Treasurer. She has served on the Council, and is known for her hospitality in hosting many weenie roasts at their home for our Christmas carolers! Beth's daughter, Marion, married Steve Neal. They have one son, Dereck. Marion has been involved in the "Ricks Circle" and has served as "Youth Group" leader. Eric, Eddie and Ernie are the children of Yates and Judy Best Harmon.

Paige Harmon, wife of Eric Harmon, has been active in Grace since she was a teen. She is a member of the Ricks Circle and is the "Youth Group" leader. Paige helped revive the "Youth Group" in 2002, and led the group on many fun outings. Paige and Eric have one daughter, Kelly Ann Harmon.

Beth Harmon's brother, Paul Hager and his family are also longtime members of Grace. Paul's wife, Shirley Hager, is a member of the "Dameron Circle", and is on the "Centennial committee". She has served the church in many capacities with the women's groups. Rick Hager, son of Paul and Shirley, is married to Robin. Robin Hager is another hard working member! She currently serves as the Vice President of the Church Council, is Secretary of the "Ricks Circle", has been "Youth Group" leader, Sunday School teacher, handbell choir member, and volunteers as "Live Nativity Scene" coordinator. Robin adds a lot to the life of the congregation! Robin and Rick have two daughters, Megan and Leanna.

Traci Hager Melton, daughter of Shirley and Paul Hager, has always been involved at Grace. As a youth, she participated in church plays, the "Live Nativity Scene" and played the clarinet during the service. As an adult, Traci has taught Sunday School and was our organist for three years. Traci and husband, Kevin Melton, have two children, Toni and Hunter.

Barbara (Harmon) Potter, first cousin of Ralph Harmon, serves as our Music Director and organist. She was a longtime member of our church choir. Many remember her beautiful solos that made the church hymns seem special. Her favorite hymn to sing is "How Great Thou Art". Barbara is married to Ron Potter. They have one daughter, Kathy (Potter) Gay. Kathy played the piano during Sunday School for the children. She became the assistant organist. She is married to Dennis Gay and has three daughters: Ashley, Jennifer and Kelly.

The music during the Sunday morning worship service has been greatly enhanced by the women of our church. Alma Pearson and Mary Dobbins served as pianists until our first organ, a Hammond, was purchased in 1950. Lena Carpenter became the first organist, and served in that capacity for 42 years! Peggy Pearson played the piano for the Sunday School opening services. Kathy Potter became the assistant organist during 1975-1978. The Allen Organ that is still used today was purchased in 1983. Barbara Potter served as organist from 1987-1992. Elisha Mitschke was her assistant. Elisha was organist from 1992-1993. Traci (Hager) Melton became our organist in 1993 and served until 1996. Elizabeth Harlow and Tracy Melton played alternately from 1996-1999. Barbara Potter returned as our organist in 1999. She is the Music Director and also leads the hand bell choir.

Paneen Froneberger was Choir and Music Director in 1979 when the hand bells were purchased. She formed the hand bell choir as well as the youth "Orff" instrument group. These wooden xylophone-type instruments added a new dimension to our music. She also assembled the talents of our youth band students who played their instruments along with the hymns.

The "Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church" hymnal (Copyright 1918) was used by our church until about 1958. At this time, Grace began using the "Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America"

(the red book—Copyright 1958). In 1979, the women's circles purchased and donated 50 new hymnals. "The Lutheran Book of Worship" (the green book—Copyright 1978) is still in use today. An additional hymnal, "With One Voice" (the blue book—Copyright 1995) was given by the Burleson Family in memory of Bernell Burleson in 2000. The Burleson Family also provided the hymnal, "This Far By Faith" (Copyright 1999) for the use of the choir. All of these hymnals will be on display at the "Centennial Homecoming"!

Bernell Burleson, wife of Lonnie Burleson, was very involved in our church. She was a devoted member of the "Barringer Circle". She and Lonnie enjoyed the church socials and were very much involved in all activities. The Burleson's have two children, Iris and Ronald. Ronald has two children Rendi and Shane, who grew up in Grace. Rendi was very involved as a youth, participating in the "Nativity scene", the youth choir, and many youth trips and projects. As an adult, she served on the church council, as a Sunday school teacher, "Youth Group" chaperone and as a "Vacation Bible School" teacher.

Emma Pasour O'Brien, wife of John W. B. O'Brien was an early member of the church, joining in the 19-teens. Her daughters were Margaret G. O'Brien and Beulah O'Brien Gamble. Margie was a member of Grace for over 75 years. She was a member of the "McClanahan Circle" and loved her church and enjoyed singing hymns every Sunday morning. Her favorite hymn was "Beautiful Savior". Margie had one son, Reggie O'Brien. Reggie married Joyce Ballard O'Brien in 1961, after which she became a member of Grace. Joyce taught Sunday school for many years, served as Director of "Vacation Bible School", delivered "Meals-on-Wheels", illustrated the "Crismon" booklet, designed the 2001-2002 church directory and is Chairperson of the "Centennial Committee". The O'Brien's have two sons, Kevin and Michael. Angela O'Brien, wife of Kevin O'Brien, is also very involved in the church. She presently serves on the church council, is Chairperson of the "Fellowship Committee", serves on the "Centennial Committee" and is a member of the "Ricks Circle". Kevin and Angie have one daughter, Summer Alexandra O'Brien.

During one Communion Sunday, Joyce O'Brien took four year old Alex with her to the Altar to receive Communion. Alex kept desperately tugging on her arm whispering, "Grandmother, Grandmother"! Thinking something was wrong, Joyce leaned down to Alex, wondering if she had to use the restroom. Alex whispered, "Can I smell the wine"? Relieved, Joyce then held the cup down so she could sniff. Satisfied, Alex looked up at Grandmother and smiled. Alex's Uncle Mike, looked at Joyce, as if to say, what are you doing? He thought she was going to give Alex a drink!

Marie Beck is very active in the "Ricks Circle" and has served on many committees. Marie is a member of the choir, has taught Sunday school, "Vacation Bible School" and presently serves on the "Call committee". Marie is always available to help when needed! She and husband, Peter, have two children, Julie and Daniel. Julie Beck Cox was very active as a youth. She was a member of the youth choir, where she played the flute, hand bells and "Orff" instruments. She is currently a member of the "Ricks Circle". Julie is married to Greg Cox. They have three children: Christopher, Tyler and Katie Cox.

Elizabeth Harlow is a very devoted and dependable church member. She currently serves on the church council, is a member of the choir, is Chairperson of the "Music and Worship" Committee, Treasurer of the "Ricks Circle" and previously served as organist for three years. Elizabeth is very creative. She crocheted an afghan of the American flag that was auctioned off to raise funds for the printing of the "Centennial Book". She also designed and made our "Centennial" banner that is on display in the Sanctuary. Elizabeth and Mike Harlow have three boys: Scott, Brian and Mickey.

— *The Women of Grace* —

Susan Wittman is known for her hard work. She has maintained the altar for six years by dusting, washing and waxing the furniture. Susan, along with her husband Mike, direct the “Hanging of the Greens” service each Christmas season. They host the “making” of the greenery and garlands at their home, and also the “Burning” of the greenery after the Advent season. At each of these events, Susan provides refreshments for all of those who participate. Susan and Mike also host many other events and drop-ins for the congregation at their home. One social she is most proud of is the picnic and swim party held around the 4th of July. Susan has served on the Church Council, the Call Committee, the Budget Finance Committee and as an officer of the “Dameron Circle”. Joyce O’Brien remembered coming by the church one hot, September afternoon after work. Susan was almost finished pressure washing the front of the Educational Building, by herself. She looked so tired and hot! She was preparing for our 97th Homecoming Celebration by cleaning and sprucing up the building and church grounds. “That’s Susan”, said Joyce, “always taking the bull by the horns and getting the job done!”

Susan’s daughter, Heather Stevens, is a member of the “Ricks Circle”. Heather worked very hard on the 2002 “Ricks Circle” yard sale. She and her husband, Eric, have two boys, Gregory and Skyler.

Dot Jenkins works very hard each year by beautifying the church grounds with flowers. She serves on the Church Council, is a member of the “Centennial Committee”, a member of the “Dameron Circle” and is Chairperson of Social Ministry and Evangelism Committee.

Another hard working woman of the church is Edith Sims. Edith has served as President of the “Dameron Circle”, is the teacher of the Adult Sunday school class, has represented our church as delegate to the annual Synod convention, as well as the W.E.L.C.A. convention. She, husband Stanley, and Mother Lucy Smith, all serve as our kitchen staff. They have prepared many meals for our “Family Night” socials and provided entertainment afterward! Lucy Smith, also a member of the “Dameron Circle”, really enjoys the “Circle” projects and preparing food for our socials!

Our church Secretary, Terri Best, is very active and devoted to our congregation. She serves as the Editor of our monthly newsletter, “Amazing Grace”. She also serves as Council Financial officer and Secretary. Terri has been a Youth leader, hosting many outings, trips and dinners for the “Youth Group”. She is a member of the “Ricks Circle” and serves on the “Centennial Committee”. Terri is married to Tony Best and she has three daughters: Amy Parker, Jessica and Julie Best.

Other women who have unselfishly given of their time to our church are Lib Trammell, Frieda Lewis, Bobbie Lineberger, Abby Shumate, Ruth McCall, and Ruth Beam. All of these women are just some of the essential members who have been the “backbone” of our church for many years. By working together as a group, the women of our church have been able to accomplish large and difficult tasks. The combined effort of these women will allow our church to do many more good works in the future!

God has work for everyone to do. He expects us to use our talents and do our part for his glory. We need to pray, have faith and work hard to magnify his good will, and not grow weary.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

— Galatians 6:9

The Youth of Grace

The Youth of Grace are the future of our church. Their participation in church activities will play a vital role in their lives in many ways. They learn responsibility, self-confidence, self-expression and how to help our fellow man. We, as parents, have the responsibility to bring our young people to church where they can grow, be nurtured and be shaped into future leaders. Children need to know and learn of God's love!

Our Youth have played a very important part in the history of our church. They have participated in many projects and events through the years. Under the leadership of many devoted adult members of the congregation, our youth have experienced the true meaning of the saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". They have seen for themselves the joy and happiness that their actions have brought to the older members of the church. The Youth have given of themselves in many different ways. Either by taking part in cleaning the church grounds during church "work days", sending the sick and "shut-in" members "get-well" cards, or by simply taking part in the church service, fewer things will bring adult members more happiness!

During the Holiday season, our youth seem to be at their highest level of involvement. They have entertained us with Christmas Carols, presented fruit baskets to the "shut-ins", made Christmas ornaments, presented Christmas plays and musicals and participated in the Bessemer City Christmas parade many times by entering a "Nativity float". The Youth have sponsored "needy" families by providing food, clothing and toys during Christmas. Everyone also looks forward to the annual "Nativity Scene" that is held on the church's front lawn!

The following stories and information about the youth represent just a small part of what they have accomplished and experienced. We hope that this section will bring back fond memories of growing up in church and help you remember your childhood years.

The earliest information that was gathered (on record) on the youth of Grace was on September 3, 1956. At this time, our youth group was called the "Luther League". They collected old papers, magazines, cardboard, etc. to raise money to buy new program books and materials.

On June 2, 1957, Grace had four "Luther Leaguers" to graduate from high school: Becky Dameron, Reggie O'Brien, Jessie Lee Smith and Alvin Rhyne. Also, Bill Dameron, son of Beulah and Luther Dameron, graduated from Lenoir Rhyne College. Bill was a member of the football team. His position was "tackle". Bill was named team captain his senior year! He took one more course during the summer in order to graduate with a double major. Bill went on to become a High School football coach.

— *The Youth of Grace* —

In January of 1962, Grace had its largest “Luther League/ Youth Group” to date. Its members included:

Leaders:

Gladys Anthony	Mary Alice Rhyne	Margie Dameron
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Members:

Flay Anthony, Jr.	Frank Dameron	Dan Pasour
Wanda Anthony	Al Froneberger	John Pasour
Alfred Best, Jr.	Peggy Froneberger	Jack Rhyne
Benny Best	Larry Harmon	Keith Smith
Wallie Best	Marion Harmon	Susan Ware
Judy Best	Kent Leonhardt	Iris Burleson
Cynthia Lutz	Ronald Burleson	Jackie McNair
Jane Dameron	Gary McNair	Carlos Dameron, Jr.
Jimmy McNair		

In 1962, Benny Best, Al Froneberger, Flay Anthony Jr. and others helped to make a mosaic plaque made of colorful, broken tiles. The design of the plaque was that of the Lutheran Symbol. This symbol shows the heart and descending dove with a blue background. This plaque still hangs in the Fellowship Hall today!

July 1962 proved to be a very busy month for the “Luther Leaguers”. On the 15th they enjoyed a swim party. On the 19th, they had Youth Choir rehearsal. Ten youth were present. The Youth Choir met every Thursday at 4:00 to practice for the upcoming Sunday service. On the 18th through the 21st, Jane Dameron and Iris Burleson were delegates to the North Carolina “Luther League” convention held in Hickory. Pastor Edwin Ricks also attended. On July 22nd, immediately following the service, the “Luther League” and others left for Lutheridge. A picnic lunch was enjoyed by all on the way there. On October 21st the youth had a Halloween party at Ned Rhyne’s airport hanger. Mary Alice Rhyne served refreshments.

The following excerpt is taken from an article which was published in “The Lutheran” magazine: In July of 1963, two of Grace’s youths took part in a “Luther League” inter-racial work camp. Flay Anthony Jr. (16 years old) and Jack Rhyne (15) joined 16 other youth from all over the United States and Germany on a trip to the “Deep South” in Frogmore, SC (near Charleston). They spent time cleaning repairing and painting the Penn Community Center. This center was located in an area where many underprivileged Black people lived. This project was first organized in 1862 to help Blacks with education, farming and health clinics. There was one young, Black girl in the “Luther League” from New York. Flay and Jack learned first hand what segregation really meant. The “Luther Leaguers” talked with the Blacks and learned about this problem through their point of view. The Youth actually faced segregation when they tried to eat together in public, there was only one dining room open to all races. They took a bag lunch to the city park and ate there. The “Youth group” took a tour of the old city of Charleston, S.C. They visited the Marine base at Paris Island, where they attended a church service conducted by Chaplain Edwin Ricks who was the director of the work camp. The “Leaguers” visited some landmarks along the historic areas of the Atlantic seaboard. One was the old Slave Market where New England Slavers sold their “Products” to plantation owners. Yankee fortunes were made selling sugar, rum and Slaves.

The “Luther League” took a retreat at Sullivan’s Island on July 28th through August 3, 1963. A large group of junior and senior youth attended. Mary Alice Rhyne, Margie Dameron and Gladys Anthony were Leaders. Mary Alice rode down early with her son Jack, Frank Dameron and Alfred Best Jr., with Alfred behind the

wheel, to clean the cabins where they were to stay. Al had just gotten his license and was very nervous about driving across the Cooper River Bridge. Everyone except Alfred was able to look down and see an atomic submarine in the river below. All were so excited! “Look, Look” yelled Frank, Jack and Mary Alice! Alfred Jr. cried, “I can’t, I can’t”. He was too scared to take his eyes off of the bridge. “I can’t look!” he yelled again!

After they had arrived, Mary Alice and Alfred cleaned the cabin while Frank and Jack went fishing. The boys caught some “awful looking” fish, exclaimed Mary Alice. Too ugly to eat, the boys threw the fish in the yard! Later, Mary Alice made them clean up the yard.

Walline and Amos Best arrived later with more youth, as did Glenn Pasour. Pastor Ricks directed the retreat. Fifteen youths attended the retreat. The young people had a great time and enjoyed walking on the beach collecting seashells. At the cabin, the children each had their own pile of shells they had collected. The shells were stacked on top of the refrigerator, on top of the tables and piled on shelves. During one of Pastor Rick’s devotions, everyone started laughing and pointing in his direction. Pastor Ricks didn’t understand why they were laughing. He thought they were laughing at him, but it was the SHELLS! They were moving across the floor, falling off of the refrigerator and the shelves! They were walking everywhere! The shells still had little creatures living inside...CRABS!

“Confirmation” is a Christian rite admitting a Baptized person into full Church membership. Our youth go through “Confirmation” class to learn the Lutheran faith and to know what it means to be a Christian. Classes usually last around one year. The process includes, learning the Creeds, studying scriptures and completing various lessons. Many times classes are taught at different Lutheran Churches by different Pastors. This gives the students a broader view and different approaches on learning the Lutheran faith. This is a very important day in the life of our church’s youth. They have become, through Baptism and Confirmation, members of the church on equal footing with each member of the congregation. In giving our Youth the support and encouragement to achieve this important accomplishment of faith, we help them to become dutiful church members and responsible citizens.

Grace Lutheran Church has held Vacation Bible School during the summer for many years. Some years we have partnered with other churches (Methodist church) and held classes at their location. We have held classes in the church basement, Sunday school rooms, the Fellowship Hall and outside on the lawn. One particular year, everyone met in the Fellowship Hall for a joint session that included the welcome and a devotion. Then the children would separate into age-group classes and report to a “station”. One night, a class would make puppets at a craft station, while another class attended the music station, where they would learn about different instruments and songs. Another group would attend the “game” station, which was held outside, while another class reported the story telling station. At the end of each night, all classes would join together for refreshments and songs!

In June of 1966, we had thirteen youth who had perfect attendance during the week of Bible School. They included:

Marianna Rhyne	Alvin Lutz	Marion Harmon
Amy Best	John Deal	Billy Harrelson
Steve Harrelson	David Ross	Marilyn Ross
Phyllis Ross	Mark Shuford	Mike Shuford
Kathy Ware		

— *The Youth of Grace* —

On August 28, 1966, the youth met at the church, then traveled to Charlotte where they attended a live stage play at Owen's Auditorium. On September 4, Betty and Willie Leonhardt invited the youth to their home for a watermelon social.

The month of October 1966 was a very busy time for the "Luther League". They enjoyed a cookout on the 2nd. On the 8th and 9th, twenty-one young people attended a "Luther League" retreat. On the 15th and 16th, the youth spent the weekend at "Lutheridge". Also in October, Cynthia Lutz and Gary McNair attend the Synodical Luther League convention. Another carload of youth attended the youth rally banquet. Wanda Anthony and Kent Leonhardt took a week at one of the Youth Ministry seminars held at Lenoir Rhyne College. Also, Pastor Shuford and family, and Yates Harmon and family took five "Leaguers" to the beach for a camping trip. Little did they know, the forecast changed and called for rain. The group, who were sleeping in tents, stayed soaking wet all weekend!

In 1967, we had four additions to our congregation. Eric Harmon, Michael O'Brien, Traci Hager and Renee Philbeck were born!

The "Luther League" held a retreat the week of August 13th at Kure Beach. The cost for each youth was \$15.00. Each youth had certain chores that they were responsible for each day. They helped clean, cook and take out the garbage. They took groceries with them to help keep down the costs. Pastor Shuford held devotions each night. Gladys Anthony, "Luther League" Director, coordinated this trip.



1970 - Sunday School Class - Joyce O'Brien, Teacher
Back Row L to R - Chris Philbeck, Ernie Harmon, Kevin O'Brien, Myra Morris,
Front Row L to R - Renee Philbeck, George Swygert, Martha Swygert, Eddie Harmon,
Mike O'Brien, Eric Harmon, Traci Hager

— *The Youth of Grace* —

The Confirmation class of 1967 included: Amy Lou Best, Rachel Best, Marilyn Ross, Gary Costner, Kathy Ware, Joseph Deal, Debra Leonhardt and Alvin Lutz. Young adults who were away at college were: Wallie Best, Al Froneberger, Jane Dameron and Peggy Froneberger (All at Lenoir Rhyne). Jack Rhyne (Western Carolina), Alfred Best, Jr. (UNC Chapel Hill), Mike Hardin (Gaston College) and Danny Lutz (Hospital Technician School).

In 1970, the “Luther League” was also very active. On June 12, they met at the church to go play “Putt-Putt” golf and had a cookout. On July 14th, the youth enjoyed a swim party at the home of Frances and Clyde Lutz. Once again, the youth went to Kure Beach in July. Ben and Diane Best, Pastor Swygert and wife, Marilyn and Wanda Anthony acted as chaperones. In August, Tracy Costner and Cindy Leonhardt went to “Lutheridge” to camp. Also in August, the “Luther League” had a guest speaker who was an inmate at the Dallas prison. Mr. Cathey had a program on problems caused by alcohol and drug use. He warned the youth about the effects that these drugs had on his life.

During the years 1974 and 1975, Grace sponsored a “Week-day Church School” for children ages three years old to sixth grade. The school, entitled “The Purple Puzzle Tree”, was held each Thursday after school. The children learned Bible stories, Bible verses, made crafts and had refreshments. Eighteen children attended (13 from Grace). Marilyn Swygert, Wanda Anthony, Carolyn Priest, Walline Best and Barbara Jenkins served as teachers.



Grace's Christmas Float 1974
Marie Beck - *Mary*; Kathy Potter - *Angel*
Bessemer City Christmas Parade

On August 11th-15th of 1976, the “Youth Group” took a 5-day trip to New Orleans. Bobbie Lineberger, chaperone, first drove the youth to St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Charlotte. There, they boarded a bus chartered by area Lutheran churches and began their 16-hour trip to the Deep South. The Youth attended a rally held at the New Orleans Super Dome. During their “free-time”, the youth were able to see the sights! They walked down Bourbon Street, walked along the river and were able to take-in the French-flavored atmosphere.

Those who attended were: Niki Costner, Penny Lineberger, Tommy Lineberger, Gerald Priest, Ronnie Philbeck, David Ross and Kathy Potter.

In 1978, the “Youth Group” members were as follows:

Carolyn Priest, Ruby Philbeck—Leaders

Sissy Priest—President

Tommy Lineberger—Vice-President

Chris Philbeck—Secretary

Sarah Priest—Treasurer

Freddie Lineberger

Kevin O’Brien

Steve Priest

Myra Morris

Under Carolyn and Ruby’s leadership, the “Youth” produced a church newsletter entitled “. “Christian Scribblings”. They reported on different committees, happenings in the church, Council news reports, a “personality” feature each month and a recipe.

Also in 1978, the youth helped deliver “Meals-on-Wheels” to the shut-ins and helped the senior members of the congregation with their yard work. They made the church “75th Anniversary” banner to hang in the Sanctuary. The “Youth” met every first Sunday of each month to discuss their projects and socials. One social they had was a western style cookout. The youth dressed as cowboys and cowgirls. Freddie Lineberger won a prize for “most authentic” costume! They had a bake sale, a car wash and did yard work to help raise funds for a planned trip to Florida.

The “Youth” took a bus to Winter Park, Florida (just outside Orlando) to attend a youth rally. Sissy Priest, Tammy Lineberger and Kathy Potter were the youth who attended. They stayed at Rolles College in the dorms. There was also a college wrestling tournament being held there. The chaperones, Bobbie Lineberger, Gladys McNair and Carolyn Priest, had to make sure that the wrestlers stayed away from the girls!

In 1980, the “Youth Group” held a “lock-in” at the Educational Building. They slept on the floor. Sleeping bags were everywhere! Some of those in attendance were: Traci Hager, Renee Philbeck, Michael O’Brien, Julie Beck, Martha Swygert and George Swygert. Wanda Anthony led the youth with a program. After the program, they had refreshments, then told stories, watched television and played board games. George Swygert’s favorite board game was “Stratego”, a military game where one army tries to capture another army’s flag. George claimed to have never been beaten at this game. He challenged Traci and Michael to play him and they accepted. As they started to play the game, the others began to settle down for the night and turned off the lights. George plugged in a lamp from the back of the Educational Building, put it on the table by the game board and the battle resumed. Not wanting to let George get the best of them, Mike and Traci devised a plan. With his foot, Mike pulled the lamp plug out of the extension cord. There was total darkness! As George tried to plug the lamp back in, Tracy would snatch George’s soldiers off of the board! After George’s flag was captured and he had lost, George could not figure out how he was so soundly defeated by two people who had never played the game before!

In 1982, the older youth of the “Youth Group” sponsored a Haunted House for the younger kids. The older youth, Renee Philbeck, Traci Hager, Eric Harmon, Mike O’Brien, Eddie Harmon, Rendi Burleson, Michelle Hall and Julie Beck used giant cardboard boxes (from the Osage Mill) to form a tunnel down the hall. The cardboard tunnel had an opening leading into each classroom. Each room was decorated with a different, spooky scene. One of the older youths would act as a guide and lead a group through the tunnel to each room. As they entered

each class, the children would be told a scary story and the costumed older youths would then jump out! One little girl became so scared that she wet her pants! In the fellowship hall, a “Go fish” game was played, a cakewalk was held and congregation members enjoyed chili beans and hotdogs. At the end of the night, a prize for the best costume was awarded.

In December of 1983, Wanda Anthony, Jeanne Setzer (Youth leaders) and Paneen Froneberger (Music Director) directed the youth in a Christmas play. The play told the story of how the small birds and animals traveled to see the birth of the baby Jesus. The older youth dressed as birds while the smaller children portrayed sheep, butterflies, bees and other creatures. An angel, played by Denny Setzer, narrated the animals’ journey to see the Christ Child. The play consisted of many songs sung by the youth. The “Youth Group” began working on this presentation in September. They constructed the bird costumes by using plastic trash bags that they covered with bright colored crepe streamer paper. The streamers, cut and taped in layers, looked just like feathers. Hoods for the costumes were also made from crepe paper and cardboard for the beaks.

1983

Back Row L to R - Scott Huggins, Mike O’Brien, Eddie Harmon, George Swygert, Martha Swygert

Middle Row L to R - John Huggins, Rendi Burluson, Julie Beck, Renee Philbeck, Mary Beth Best, Michelle Hall

Front Row L to R - Friend, Ernie Harmon, Eric Harmon



Christmas Play 1983

Birds and small animals traveled to see the birth of baby Jesus.
Front: Julie Beck, Traci Hager, Michelle Hall, Renee Philbeck,
Rendi Burluson

Back: Mike O’Brien, Eddie Harmon, Eric Harmon



1983 Confirmation Class Lutheridge
Holly Jenkins & Pastor Setzer

— *The Youth of Grace* —

In 1984, Wanda Anthony and Jeanne Setzer, “Youth Group” leaders, took the youth to Cherry Grove (N. Myrtle Beach) for a weeklong beach retreat. Other chaperons were Pastor Setzer, Beth and Kent Leonhardt and Ron Burleson. The youth worked all year long to raise money for this trip by doing yard work and by holding car washes. The following youth attended: Rendi and Shane Burleson, Renee Philbeck, Michelle Hall, Eric and Eddie Harmon, Mike O’Brien, Julie Beck, Mary Beth and Amy Best, Denny, Kirk, Trevor and John Setzer and Brayton and Jennifer Leonhardt. Each night, Pastor Setzer led the youth in a program and devotion. The youth spent a lot of time on the beach, rode the rides at the Pavilion, went out to eat seafood, and had an overall great time!

In April of 1985, the “youth” painted the Educational Building. The walls and ceiling were given a fresh coat of paint. Mold on the wooden rafters was cleaned with Clorox and water. The youth helped with the Easter egg hunt. On April 21st, the youth of Grace attend the Southwestern District spring youth event, held at Lutheran Chapel Church in Gastonia. Each “Youth Group” shared a brief summary of their activities and goals of the present and past years. Julie Beck spoke on behalf of our youth.

Vacation Bible School was held June 24-29 at Grace. A swim party and ice cream supper was held at the Bessemer City pool on the closing night.

On July 28, 1985, again, the “Youth Group” went to the beach for a retreat. Chaperons were Wanda Anthony, Pastor and Jeanne Setzer, Judy and Danny Kirby, Kent and Beth Leonhardt and Sissy Priest. All the youth from the previous year’s trip attended, along with Lori Kirby. The group rented the same beach house as in 1984 at Cherry Grove. In December, the youth led the congregation in the “Youth Sunday” worship service. Members of the youth ushered, read the Gospel and the lessons, led the prayers, etc. Denny Setzer gave the sermon. The youth also provided the anthem by playing the wooden “Orff” instruments. Julie Beck (flute), Kevin and Michael O’Brien (guitars), Denny Setzer and Eddie Harmon (saxophones) and Renee Philbeck, Michelle Hall, Traci Hager and Mary Beth Best (clarinets) accompanied the hymns under the direction of Paneen Froneberger.

In 1985, the Jr.-Sr. High Sunday school class was 21 people strong! The class was taught by Joyce O’Brien. Class members painted several Sunday school classrooms as a project.

The youth of Grace went on several ski trips during the 1980’s. One particular trip was taken in February of 1986, to Sugar Mountain Ski resort for night skiing. Rendi Burleson, Michelle Hall, Eddie Harmon, Mike O’Brien, Mary Beth and Amy Best and Julie Beck were in attendance. Wanda Anthony and Marilyn Ross were chaperones.

On March 23, 1986, a play, “The Vinegar Boy”, was presented by the youth. A hoagie sandwich dinner was held after the program. The “Youth” were involved in several other socials that year: went out to eat pizza, had their annual Halloween party, and had a December sleep-in hosted by Ben and Diane Best at their home.

On May 17, 1987, the youth went to Carowinds after the morning worship service. From June 22nd through 27th, Vacation Bible School was held. On August 16th, Al & Paneen Froneberger hosted the youth at their river cabin on Lake Wylie for the afternoon. In October, the “Youth Group” hosted a cookout for their families at the church.

In 1988 the “Youth Group” was very involved. In June, the youth went to the river cabin of Al and Paneen Froneberger for the day. They took a bag lunch, and then went to “Carowinds”. On June 26th, the Youth was invited back to the Froneberger lake house where they spent the weekend. The youth held workdays to raise funds to pay for food, supplies and snacks that were enjoyed. They cookout each day, fished, swam and water-skied. Vacation Bible School was held in August at First United Methodist Church. In October, the youth sponsored their Halloween Fall Festival. During the Holiday season, the youth participated in the “Live Nativity Scene”.

In February of 1989, the youth enjoyed another ski trip to Sugar Mountain Ski Resort. Those in attendance were: Brooke and John Weatherford, Eddie Harmon, Mike O’Brien, Stacy Gaddy (Mike’s college roommate), Mary Beth and Amy Best, Brayton and Jennifer Leonhardt and others. Wanda Anthony and Marilyn Ross chaperoned. In March, Beth and Kent Leonhardt hosted a youth dinner at their home. Afterward, they all went bowling. In April, the “Youth Group” attended a dance at “Holy Communion Church” in Dallas. Traci Hager graduated from UNC Chapel Hill in May. On May 21st, the youth took another trip to “Carowinds” after the morning worship service.

On July 9-15, Pastor Mitschke took the “Youth Group” camping to “Lutherock”. On August 19, the held a workday at the church. They cleaned the Educational building and did odd jobs around the churchyard. On September 16, the “youth” went to “Youth Day” at Lenoir Rhyne College.

On Labor Day weekend in 1989, the “Youth Group” went to the Lutheran owned beach house at Kure Beach. Adult chaperones were Wanda Anthony (Leader), Beth and Kent Leonhardt, Pastor and Anne Mitschke, Judy and Ken Weatherford. Mike O’Brien, Mary Beth Best and Eddie Harmon (college students) also helped chaperone. The youth paid for this trip by doing yard work. Youth who went to the beach were: Jennifer and Brayton Leonhardt, Brooke and John Weatherford, Butch and Elisha Mitschke and John And Marcie Froneberger.

The “Fellowship Committee” hosted an “All Hallows Eve” party at the Educational Building on October 31st. A chili bean supper began at 6:30. Adult games and children’s games were enjoyed by all. Wanda Anthony, who planned the event, handed out prizes, treats and candy.

In January of 1990, a ski trip to Sugar Mountain was enjoyed. On January 28, the youth participated in youth Sunday. They handled many duties of the morning worship service. In February, the “Youth Group” went out to eat pizza at the “Pizza Hut”. On June 3, Elisha Mitschke and Robbie Kaiser were confirmed and welcomed into full membership. On July 8–14th, Pastor Mitschke, Marcie Froneberger, Daniel Beck and John Weatherford enjoyed a week at “Lutherock”. On September 29th, the youth attended the “Youth Day” at Lenoir Rhyne College. Wanda Anthony and Tommy Lineberger took the youth to Hickory for a day of activities, ending with the football game. The youth enjoyed their annual Halloween party in October, and also participated in Christmas caroling and the “Live Nativity Scene” in December.

On March 21st, the youth of Grace met at 5:00 to go on a hike at Crowder’s Mountain. In May, the “Youth” held a car wash to raise funds for their week at “Lutherock” in June.

— *The Youth of Grace* —

In May of 1991, Grace and First United Methodist Church sponsored a softball team that played in the Kings Mountain Church League. Mike O'Brien (Grace) and Lee Young (First United Methodist) were team captains. Those who participated were:

Grace Lutheran

Ben Best
Pastor Mitschke
Butch Mitschke
Eric Harmon
Rodney Shubert
Kevin O'Brien
Mike O'Brien
John Kaiser
Kent Leonhardt
Brayton Leonhardt
Fred Lineberger
Robby Morgan

First United Methodist

Mike Williams
Michael Williams, Jr.
Matt Putnam
Lee Young
David Hope
Chris Hope



Confirmation Sunday 1991

Marcie Froneberger, John Weatherford, Pastor Mitschke, Daniel Beck

In March of 1992, the youth of Grace held a Bible "Read-a-thon" at one cent per chapter. The youth read all evening long! On October the 17th, the "Youth" held a bake sale at "Pier 66" Fishcamp to raise money for a trip to "The Biltmore House" planned in December. The trip took place on a Friday afternoon. As the "Youth" left for Asheville, a light snow began to fall! Once at the Biltmore Estate, the "Youth Group" were amazed at all of the beautiful decorations, the many glistening lights and the huge Christmas trees! Upon leaving, once again, a light snow started to fall, making the trip seem like a fantasy winter wonderland! Terry Best, Youth Leader, said they had a wonderful time! Also in December, Terry had the group over for a spaghetti supper at her home.

In 1996, the "Youth" again, held a bake sale in front of "Pier 66" Restaurant to raise funds for their projects. In August the young people went to play "Put-Put" golf. Ten children participated. After playing golf, the youth returned to church and ate a bag lunch, then made centerpieces for "Homecoming".

— *The Youth of Grace* —

In 1997 the “Youth Group” of Grace Lutheran Church sponsored the publication of a cookbook. The cookbook, entitled, “Just Add Grace”, was a project to raise money for future “Youth Group” activities. A variety of recipes were collected from church members and family and friends of the congregation. Three hundred copies were printed and arrived in January. Sales went well and copies are still available for purchase.

On March 31st, a special presentation entitled “Come and Share the Spirit” was performed for the congregation after the service. The prelude was performed by Scott Harlow on the guitar. The choir sang “Amazing Grace”, accompanied by Margaret McSwain on the autoharp, for the anthem. The postlude, “Were You There?” was sung by Julie Best, accompanied by Tracie Hager on the organ. Following the Postlude, Pastor Mitschke and Mike Harlow presented a skit, entitled “John and Peter in the Garden”. While the Pastor and Mike were changing into costumes, Julie Best performed several hymns on the piano. Following this presentation, a dinner was held in the Fellowship Hall. This event was held so that everyone would know that they have “shared the Holy Spirit of God” today!

On May 10, 1997, the “Youth Group” participated in the Bessemer City “Down Home Day” celebration. They sold baked goods, cookbooks and crafts.

In December 1999, the youth of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church joined the youth of Grace in participating in the “Live Nativity Scene”.



Halloween Party 2001

Christopher Cox, Alex O’Brien, Toni Melton, Traci Melton, Hunter Melton (sitting), friend

— *The Youth of Grace* —

In June 2002, the “Youth Group” was reorganized by Paige and Eric Harmon. “Youth Group” members are as follows:

Junior Youth

Alex O'Brien	Tyler Cox
Bryce Ledbetter	Katie Cox
Christopher Cox	Skyler Stevens
Gregory Stevens	Toni Melton
Hunter Melton	



Youngest Member November, 2002
Katie Cox Baptized

Senior Youth

Leanna Hager	Megan Hager
Emily Ledbetter	Lauren Ledbetter
Jessica Best	Julie Best
Kelly Harmon	Mickey Harlow

The group was very active during the year. The first activity held was a sleepover in the Educational Building. They ate pizza and popcorn, played games and watched movies. In September, They attended the “Cleveland County Fair”, went to “Youth Day” at Lenoir Rhyne College where they toured the campus and attended the football game that evening. In October, Charles Groves hosted a Halloween cookout and party at his home. The youth played games, roasted weenies and marshmallows and listened to spooky stories around the campfire. At the end of the evening, Charles led them on his “Haunted Trail! Scott Ledbetter, Ricky Hager, Eric Harmon, Jessica Best and Mike O’Brien were the goblins. On Halloween night, the “Youth” traveled to Spencer Mountain to a haunted trail. Eighteen people enjoyed the frights! The “Youth” also had a pizza party and made get-well cards for sick members of the church.

— *The Youth of Grace* —

During the Advent season, the “Youth” and the “Rick’s Circle” sponsored two underprivileged boy’s and their families for Christmas. They provided Clothes and Christmas dinner for each family. The “Youth” went Christmas caroling, visiting many families of the congregation as well as shut-in members. Afterwards, they enjoyed a weenie roast at the home of Charles Groves. The “Youth” closed out the year by holding the “Live Nativity Scene” for the community.

In April of 2003, the “Youth Group” and the “Rick’s Circle” sponsored an Easter egg hunt for the younger children. A hot dog lunch was enjoyed and games were played. Thirty people attended. Paige and Eric Harmon, Youth Leaders, prepared the meal and Terri Best helped with the activities. At a meeting on August 10th, the “Youth” made signs to advertise for the “Rick’s Circle” yard sale. On August 30th, the “Youth Group” painted the iron hand rails at the church in preparation for the 100th Homecoming. After the work was finished, they enjoyed a cookout and swim party at the home of Mike O’Brien.

Easter Egg Hunt April 2003



Julie Cox and Katie Cox



Front: Tyler Cox

Middle: Skyler Stevens, Katelyn Lovell, Hunter Melton, Bryce Ledbetter, Christopher Cox

Back: Alex O’Brien, Toni Melton

Grace Lutheran Church has a long history of sponsoring “The Boy Scouts of America”. Dating back to 1928, the Rev. Noah Yount, Pastor of Grace, took over Boy Scout Troop #1. In 1931, Mr. Miles L. Rhyne was Scoutmaster. Mr. Rhyne had the honor of presenting the first “Eagle Scout” award in Bessemer City to Joe Hanbuckle.

— *The Youth of Grace* —

In May of 1987, Grace once again sponsored a troop. The “Panther Patrol” of B.S.A. Troop # 517 attended the “Two Rivers District Camporee”. This troop was ranked as one of the top ten patrols by earning 1,258 out of a possible 1350 points by competing in different events. Mr. Ronald Ashe was Scoutmaster from 1987-1991.

John and Robbie Kaiser were members of this troop. In August, at the “Court of Honor” of B.S.A. Troop # 517, John Kaiser received one skill award and four merit badges. Robbie Kaiser received two skill awards, three merit badges and the rank of “First Class”.

In 1991, Michael Harlow became Scoutmaster of this troop. In the following years, these young men received the “Eagle Scout” Award:

John Kaiser— 1991	Brian Ashe—1991
Robbie Kaiser—1993	William Dougan—1994
Butch Mitschke—1994	Ben Davison—1994
Jason Hollingshead—1995	Michael Smith—1997
Scott Harlow—1998	Brian Harlow—2000

Marie Dougan served as Asst. Scoutmaster in 1993. On October 30, 1994, Troop # 517, with the help of members of Grace, sponsored a spaghetti supper to raise funds for the troop. In 1996 the church parking lot was completely resurfaced with asphalt sealer by Scott Harlow for his “Eagle Scout” project. Several men of the church were there for assistance.

In the spring of 1997, Boy Scout Troop # 517 took an overnight camping trip in the O’Brien’s woods. Mike Harlow and Pastor Mitschke chaperoned the scouts. The scouts explored the woods, cooked their meals and sat around the campfire for stories.

On Tuesday October 28, 1997, the “Youth Group” joined the Scout Troop at the gazebo in downtown Bessemer City. The two groups planted trees and flowers as a community beautification project. “Lutheran Brotherhood” and “Aid Association For Lutherans” reimbursed them for all expenses of this project. Boy Scout Troop # 517 disbanded in 2000.

As you can see, the Youth of Grace have been involved in many activities. By taking part in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, the “Youth Group” and the Boy Scouts, our youth have not only enjoyed the social aspects of being involved in a group, but also have prepared themselves for the future by learning responsibility, leadership skills and Christian values!

Acknowledgements

Centennial Committee

Joyce and Reggie O'Brien—Co-Chairmen

Charles Groves

Dot Jenkins

Betty Jo Morris

Terri Best

Lonnie Burleson

Mary Alice Rhyne

Mike O'Brien

Shirley Hager

Luther Dameron

Angie O'Brien

(Thanks to the Centennial Committee for their research of the old church bulletins)

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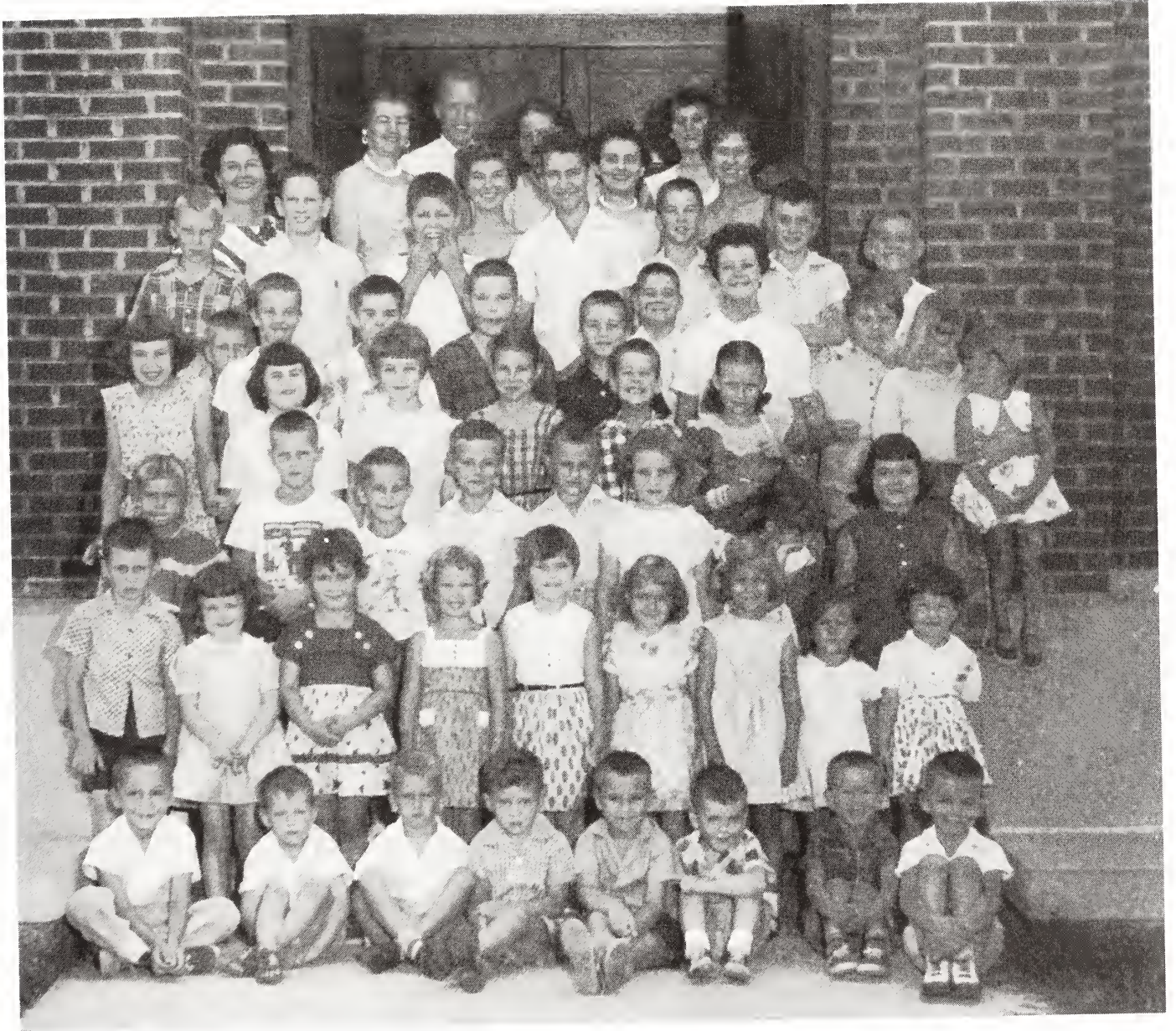
Catherine Ross

Beth Harmon

Resources:

1. Records of the Church Council meetings
2. Excerpts from the "Bessemer City Record" newspaper
3. Old ledgers of the church Treasurer (Mr. A.B. Kiser)
4. Old record books of the Lutheran church women's meetings by Mrs. Zoe Plonk.
5. Old church bulletins (Centennial Committee researched)
6. History of the Evangelical Lutheran church of the Good Shepherd 1881-1981 (By Rita Broome)
7. Old church newsletters
8. Excerpts from "Life Sketches of Lutheran Clergy, North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran church in America and Antecedents, 1773-1999.
9. Many conversations with current and former members of Grace Church
10. Based in part on previous notes on church history by Mr. A.B. Kiser (1954), Ms. Alna Kiser (1963) and Mr. Clyde Kiser (1978).

1952



— 1970 Church Family —



Mr. & Mrs Belmon A. Anthony



The Flay U. Anthony Family &
Mrs Flay U. Anthony, Jr.



Flay U. Anthony, Jr.



Mrs. H. P. Barringer



The Alfred H. Best Family



The Amos E. Best Family



Mrs. O. H. Bollinger



Mrs. Lonnie Burleson & Mrs. Ken Phillips
& Family



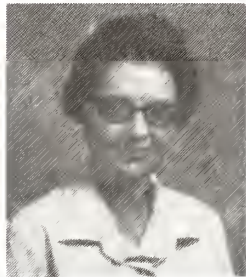
Mrs. William Campbell &
Phillip



Mr. & Mrs Carl G.
Carpenter



Miss Eva Carpenter



Mrs. David Coon



Cathy, Randy, Sue Anne & Tracy
Costner



Mrs. Dennis G. Crawford



The Carlos L. Dameron
Family



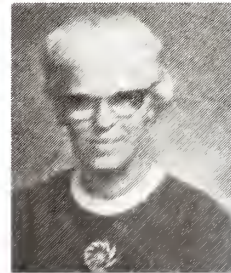
Frank Dameron



Mr. & Mrs. Madison R.
Dameron



The Thomas E. Dameron Family



Mrs. Mary Dobbins



Mr. & Mrs. Eugene A.
Froneberger



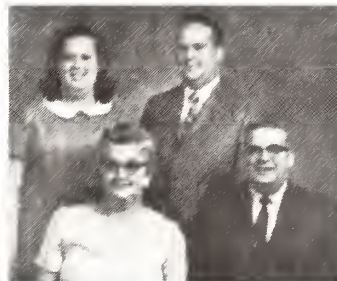
Mrs. W. J. Gamble



The Paul Hager Family



Mr. & Mrs. R. Lee Hager

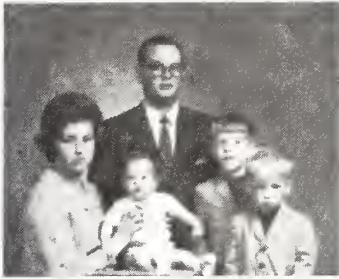


The Ralph Harmon Family



Larry J. Harmon

— 1970 Church Family —



The Yates Harmon Family



Mr. & Mrs. Bob Kaiser



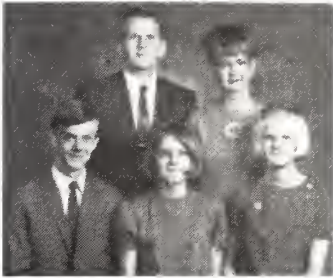
Miss Alna Kiser



Miss Elva Kiser



Dr. Clyde V. Kiser



The William Leonhardt Family



Mr. & Mrs. George Lewis



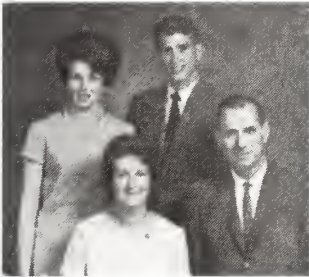
Mrs. Crawford Lovelace



Mr. & Mrs. Avery Lutz



Mrs. Ruth McCall



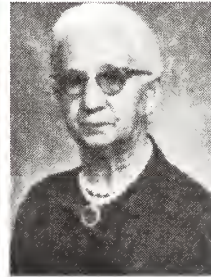
The Jack McNair Family



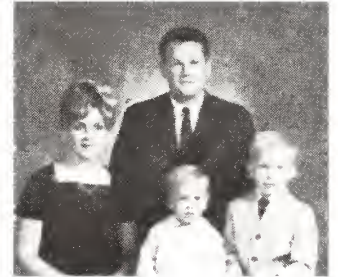
Mrs. William Morris & Betty



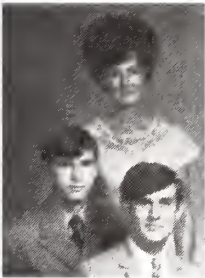
The William W. Morris Family



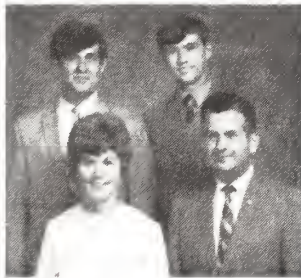
Mrs. Annie Neal



The John R. O'Brien Family



Mrs. Betty T. Pasour,
John & Danny



The Glenn O. Pasour Family



Mrs. Meek B. Pearson &
Peggy



The J. Louis Philbeck Family



The Ronald Potter Family



Mrs. Earl L. Rhyne



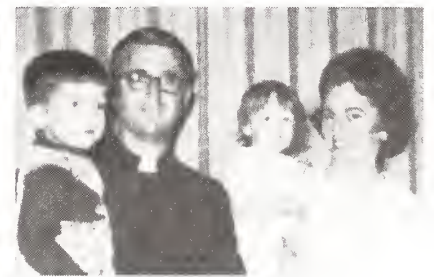
The Robert H. Ross Family



J. L. Smith, Jr.



Keith Smith



The G. David Swygert Family

— 1981 Church Family —



Gladys Anthony
Wanda



Peter & Marie Beck
Julie & Daniel



Amos & Walline Best



H. Alfred & Jo Best



Alma Coon



Carlos & Marjorie Dameron



Luther & Beulah Dameron



Mrs. Madison Dameron



Al & Paneen Fronberger
Marci



Gene & Pansy Fronberger



Paul & Shirley Hager
Traci



Ralph & Beth Harmon



Yater Harmon
Eric & Eddie



Larry & Penny Herman



Barbara Jenkins
Holly & Ryan



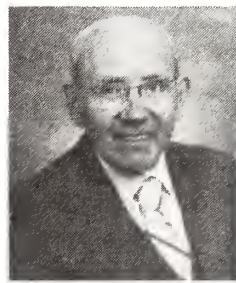
Dot Jenkins
Scott



Jane Kaiser
John & Robbie



Alna Kiser



Dr. Clyde Kiser



Elva Kiser



Beth Leonhardt
Brayton & Jennifer



George & Frieda Lewis



Norman & Amy Lewis
Chris



Tom & Bobbie Lineberger
Fred



Tommy & Debbie Lineberger

— 1981 Church Family —



Ralph & Betsy Luce



Alvin & Susan Lutz
Andy



Clyde & Frances Lutz



Ruth McCall



Jack & Gladys McNair



Betty Morris



Bill & Pat Morris
Myra



Verdie Mullinax



Marion Neal
Dereck



Marjorie O'Brien



Reggie & Joyce O'Brien
Kevin & Michael



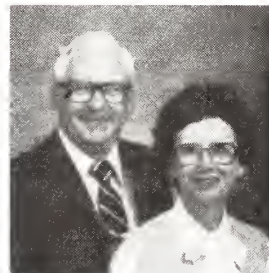
Alma Pearson



Peggy Pearson



Louis & Ruby Philbeck
Ronnie, Chris & Renee



Ronald & Barbara Potter



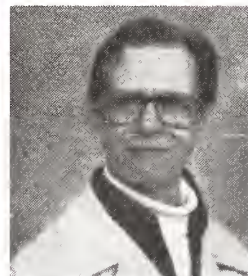
Carolyn Preast
Steve & Sarah



Phyllis Ross



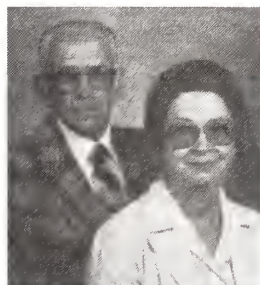
Robert & Catherine Ross



J.V. Schuler



David & Marilyn Swygert
George, Martha & Michael



Carl & Leia Ware



Lonnie & Bernell Burleson



Ferrie Hager



Kathy Potter

— 1987 Church Family —



Gladys Anthony
& Wanda



Peter & Marie Beck
Julie & Daniel



Alfred & Jo Best



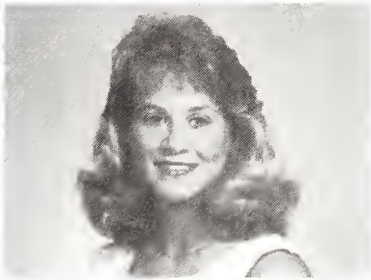
Amos & Walline Best



Anthony & Terri Best
Jessica & Julie & Amy Parker



Lonnie & Burnell Burleson



Rendi Burleson



Rebecca Cole



Alta Costner



Dot Costner



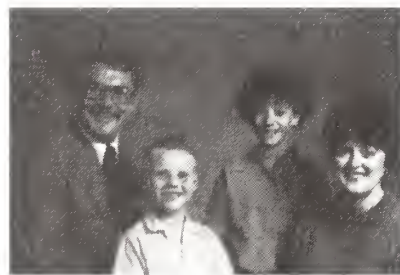
Bera Dameron



Carlos & Marjorie Dameron



Luther & Beulah Dameron



Al & Paneen Fronberger,
Marcy & John



Gene & Pansy Fronberger

— 1987 Church Family —



Ralph & Beth Harmon



Allen & Carolyn Huggins



Jane Kaiser
John & Robby



Danny & Judy Kirby,
Ernie & Eddie



Alna Kiser



Clyde Kiser



Elva Kiser



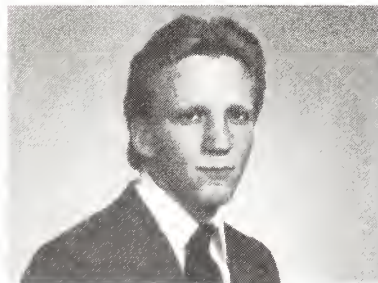
Joe & Dot Lemaster



Beth Leonhardt
Brayton & Jennifer



George & Frieda Lewis



Fred Lineberger



Tom & Bobbie Lineberger



Tommy & Debbie Lineberger
Shawn, Jennifer & Megan



Alvin & Susan Lutz
& Andy

— 1987 Church Family —



Ruth McCall



Bob & Ann Mitschke,
Elisha & Butch



Bill & Pat Morris



Verdie Mullinax



Steve & Marion Neal,
Dereck & Stephen



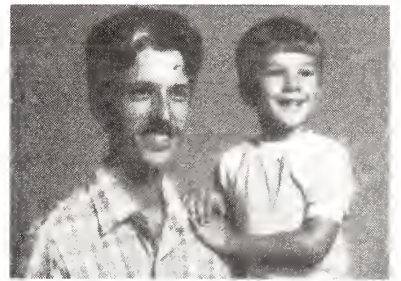
Marjorie O'Brien



Reggie & Joyce O'Brien,
Kevin & Michael



Ron & Barbara Potter



Gerald Preast
& Travis



Dot Rhyme



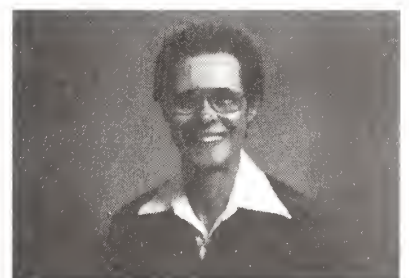
Bertha Ritchie



Phyllis Ross



Robert & Catherine Ross



J. V. Schuler

— 1987 Church Family —



William & Mildred Smith



Fred & Billie Thompson

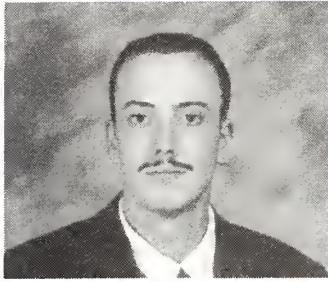


Lib Trammell



Lela Ware

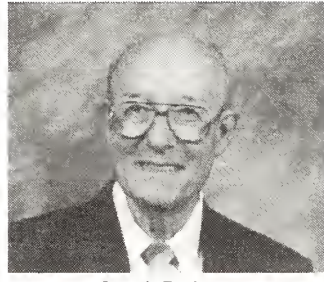
— 2002 Church Family —



Daniel Beck



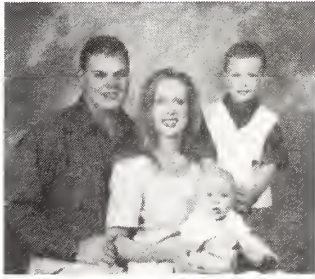
Peter & Marie Beck



Lonnie Burleson



Jackie Carpenter



Gregory & Julie Cox,
Christopher & Katie



Carlos & Marjorie Dameron



W. Luther & Beulah Dameron



Michael & Susan Flanigan-Wittman



Charles Groves



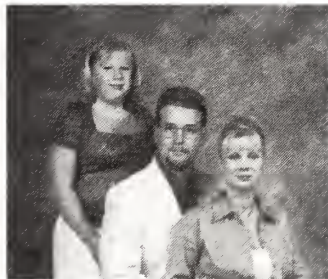
Paul & Shirley Hager



Ricky & Robin Hager,
Megan & Leanna



Michael & Elizabeth Harlow,
& Mickey



Eric & Paige Harmon
& Kelly



Ralph & Beth Harmon



Lillian Jenkins



Jane Kaiser



Scott & Myra Ledbetter,
Lauren, Emily & Bryce



Frieda Lewis



Tom & Bobbie Lineberger



Clyde & Frances Lutz

— 2002 Church Family —



Gladys McNair



Kevin & Traci Melton,
Tomi & Hunter



Betty Morris



Bill & Pat Morris



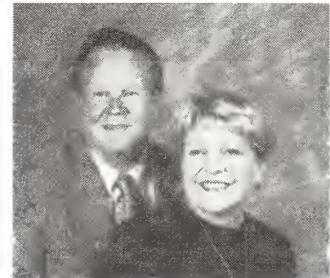
Steve & Marion Neal
& Dereck



Kevin & Angie O'Brien,
& Alex



Michael O'Brien



Reggie & Joyce O'Brien



Todd & Cathy Parker
& Brandon



Peggy Pearson



Catherine Ross



Phyllis Jean Ross



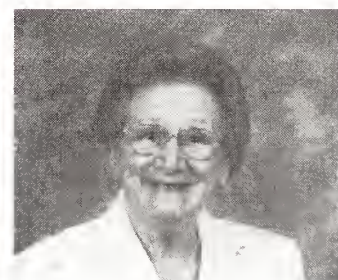
J. V. Schuler



Abbie Shumate



Stanley & Edith Sims



Lucy Smith



Eric & Heather Stevens
Gregory & Skyler



Bobby & Becky Wells



Ruth Beam



H. Alfred Best

— 2002 Church Family —



Ruth McCall
Oldest Member - 97 Years Old



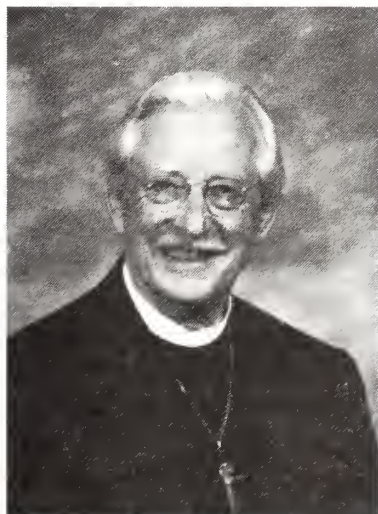
Mary Alice Rhyne



Lib Trammell



Welcome to Grace



Cyrus Frazier
Interim Pastor



Terri Best
Secretary & Financial



Barbara Potter
Organist & Choir Director

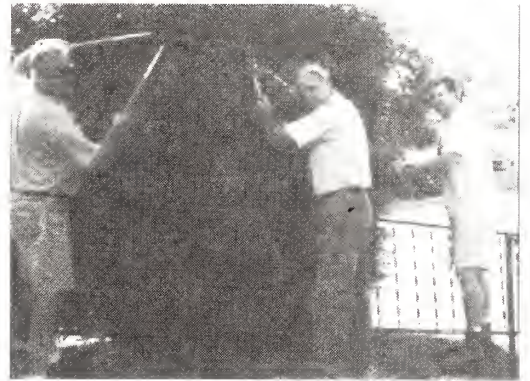
— ADVENT SEASON —



— CHURCH FELLOWSHIP —



— WORKING TOGETHER —

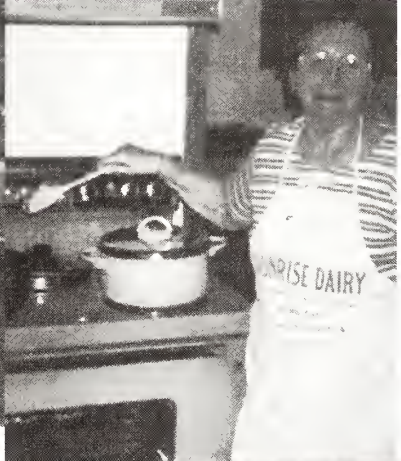




— BURNING OF THE GREENS —



— EASTER FELLOWSHIP —



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A

